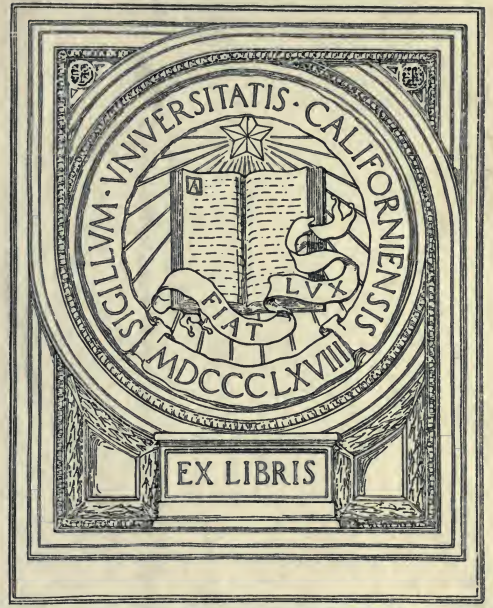
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THE

LITERARY

MISCELLANY:

or,

SELECTIONS & EXTRACTS,

classical and scientific;

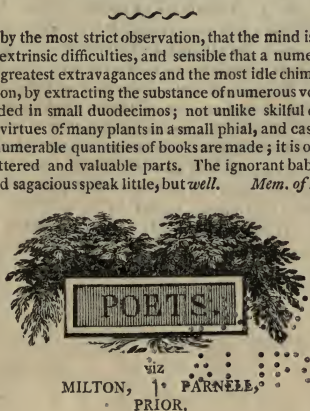
with

Originals,

in

PROSE AND VERSE.

Convinced, by the most strict observation, that the mind is embarrassed by a thousand extrinsic difficulties, and sensible that a numerous library is the seat of the greatest extravagances and the most idle chimeras, we have made an election, by extracting the substance of numerous volumes, which we have included in small duodecimos; not unlike skilful chymists, who concentre the virtues of many plants in a small phial, and cast aside the refuse. Innumerable quantities of books are made; it is our business to collect the scattered and valuable parts. The ignorant babble eternally; the learned and sagacious speak little, but *well.* *Mem. of the Year* 2500.



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The *making of verses* and *writing of poetry*, are two things extremely different; for poetry may exist even without verse or rhyme; and rhyme may be very perfect without the smallest spark of poetry. We should discriminate between these. There is perhaps no person existing, who, with an ordinary fund of ideas, cannot write verses. It is merely a mechanical operation; and if a person has a natural ear for rhythmical arrangements, he will be able to make the syllables follow each other very smoothly. But if he has not a talent for great and bold conceptions; or for placing objects in such positions, as to excite new and vivid ideas, which produce pleasing images in the mind of the reader, the essence of poetry is wanting, and it is merely a dead and lifeless form. The book of Job, because it posesses these requisites in a high degree, is by all admitted to be a poetical composition, tho' the form of verse itself and rhymes are totally wanting. Some poetic compositions have been greatly injured by being turned into verse. Of these the psalms of David, and several sublime passages in the Bible, are striking examples. "On English Poetry," in Dr. Anderson's "Bee."

MILTON

Published July 1808, by George Nicholson, Stourport.

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LIFE OF MILTON.

John Milton was born in London on the 9th of December, 1608, at his father's house in Bread-street. The family, once opulent proprietors of Milton in Oxfordshire, forfeited that estate during the civil wars of York and Lancaster. John, the grandfather of our poet, intending to educate his son as a gentleman, placed him at Christ-Church, Oxford, but being himself a rigid papist, he disinherited the young scholar for an attachment to the doctrines of the reformation; who, in consequence, was obliged to have recourse to some more lucrative employment. He engaged, therefore, in drawing contracts and lending money, at that time denominated a scrivenor. The emoluments of this profession enabled the father of Milton to bestow most abundantly on his son those advantages of education, which had cruelly been withdrawn from himself. He married a lady of the name of Caston, of Welsh descent, by whom he had issue, John, the poet; Christopher, bred to the law (afterwards knighted and made a judge by James II); and Anne, married to Edward Phillips, who enjoyed a lucrative post in the crown office. Tho' immersed in a trading occupation, the father of our poet is said to have retained great elegance of mind, and to have amused himself with literature and music. It is probable that the severe manner in which an indulgent father had been driven from the pursuits of learning, induced him to exert uncommon liberality

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and ardour in the education of his son. Of Milton's early passion for letters he has himself left the following record, in his *Second Defence:* "My father destined me from my infancy to the study of polite literature, which I embraced with such avidity, that from the age of twelve, I hardly ever retired from my books before midnight. This proved the first source of injury to my eyes, whose natural weakness was attended with frequent pains of the head; but as all these disadvantages could not repress my ardour for learning, my father took care to have me instructed by various preceptors, both at home and at school." His domestic tutor was Thomas Young, of Essex, who quitted this country on account of religious persecution, but returned in a few years and became Master of Jesus College, Cambridge. The reverential gratitude and affection of Milton towards this preceptor are recorded in two Latin epistles, and a Latin elegy, addressed to him: they suggest a most favourable idea of the poet's native disposition, and furnish an effectual antidote to the poison of that most injurious assertion, that "he hated all whom he was required to obey." About the 15th year of Milton's age he was sent to St. Paul's school, and in the year following he was entered as a pensioner of Christ's College, Cambridge. At Cambridge he experienced a chequered fortune, very similar to his destiny in the world. It appears from some passages in his Latin exercises that he was first an object of partial severity, and afterwards of general admiration. When Milton began his academical studies he had views of entering the church, a religious scruple, however, prevented him. During his residence in the University, he composed most of his Latin poems,

in a style exquisitely imitative of the best models of antiquity. Milton is said to be the first Englishman who wrote Latin verse with classical elegance. Having passed seven years in Cambridge, and taken his two degrees, that of bachelor, in 1628, and that of master, in 1632, he was admitted to the same degree at Oxford. On quitting an academic life, he was much regretted by the fellows of his college; but he regarded the house of his father as a retreat favourable to his literary pursuits, and at the age of twenty-four, he gladly shared the rural retirement in which his parents had recently settled, at Horton, in Buckinghamshire: here he devoted himself, for five years, to study, with that ardour and perseverance, to which, as he says of himself, in a letter to his bosom friend, Charles Diodati, his nature forcibly inclined him. He here produced his masque of *Comus*, a composition which displays great variety of poetical powers. The *Arcades* seems to have been one of his early compositions, as it was intended as a compliment to his fair neighbour, the accomplished Countess Dowager of Derby, who was the sixth daughter of Sir John Spencer, and allied to Spencer the poet. At the house of this lady near Uxbridge, Milton is said to have been a frequent visitor. The Earl of Bridgewater, before whom, and by whose children, Comus was represented, had married a daughter of Ferdinando Earl of Derby. *Lycidas* was also produced during Milton's residence with his father in November 1637; a poem very beautiful of it's kind. It was intended as a Monody on the death of his friend Edward King, son of Sir John King, secretary for Ireland, who was lost in his passage to that country. It is faulty in running ofter remote allu-

sions, and obscure opinions, with which the effusions of real passion do not abound: where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief. It has, notwithstanding, received unbounded admiration, to which it is undoubtedly entitled on account of it's sublime and pathetic beauties; it's tenderness, imagination, and harmony. Tho' no circumstances are found to ascertain the date of the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, it seems probable, that those two enchanting pictures of rural life, and of the diversified delights arising from a contemplative mind, were composed at Horton. During the five years that Milton resided with his parents, in Buckinghamshire, he had occasional lodgings in London, which he visited for the purpose of buying books, and improving himself in mathematics and in music, at that time his favourite amusements. On the death of his mother, who died in April, 1637, and is buried in the chancel of Horton church, he obtained his father's permission to gratify his eager desire of visiting the continent. Having received some directions for his travels from the celebrated Sir Henry Wotton, he went, with a single servant, to Paris, in 1638; he was there noticed by Lord Scudamore, the English ambassador, who gave him an introduction to Grotius, then at Paris as minister of Sweden. It is very probable that Grotius warmly recommended to Milton, on his departure for Italy, to pay the kindest attention in his power to the sufferings of Galileo, then imprisoned and persecuted by the inquisition in Florence, for in a letter to Vossius, dated in the very month when Milton was probably introduced to Grotius, that liberal friend to science and humanity speaks thus of Galileo: "This old man, to whom the universe is so deeply indebt-

ed, worn out with maladies, and still more with anguish of mind, gives us little reason to hope, that his life can be long; common prudence, therefore, suggests to us to make the utmost of the time, while we can yet avail ourselves of such an instructor." Milton has informed us, that he saw the illustrious scientific prisoner of the inquisition. From Paris our author proceeded to Italy, embarking at Nice for Genoa. After a cursory view of Leghorn and Pisa, he settled for two months at Florence; a city which he particularly regarded for the elegance of it's language, and the men of genius it had produced. After a short visit to Sienna, he resided two months in Rome, enjoying the refined society of that city. By the favour of Holstenius, the well-known librarian of the Vatican, he was recommended to the notice of Cardinal Barberini (afterwards Pope Urban VIII.), who honoured him with the most flattering attention. It was at the concerts of the Cardinal that he was captivated by the charms of Leonora Baroni, whose extraordinary musical powers he has celebrated in Latin verse. Milton, in his *Second Defence* tells us, that in passing from Rome to Naples, his fellow-traveller was a hermit, who introduced him to Baptista Manso, Marquis of Villa, an accomplished nobleman, and distinguished as the friend and biographer of two eminent poets, Tasso and Marino. "In Manso," says Milton, "I found a most friendly guide, who shewed me himself the curiosities of Naples, and the palace of the Viceroy. He came more than once to visit me, while I continued in that city; and when I left it, he earnestly excused himself, that altho' he greatly wished to render me more good offices, he was unable to do so in Naples, because in

my religion I had disdained all disguise."
Manso was the bosom friend of Tasso; the friend who had cherished that great and afflicted poet under his roof in a season of mortal calamity, restored his health, re-animated his fancy, and given a religious turn to the latest efforts of his majestic muse.
It was the design of Milton to extend his travels to Sicily and Greece, but receiving intelligence of the troubles in his native country he hasted home, judging it criminal to indulge in amusements while his countrymen were contending for their liberties. He returned by way of Florence, Lucca, Bologna, and Ferrara, to Venice; from thence through Verona and Milan to Geneva; and by his former road through France. While at Florence, Milton received the mournful intelligence, that the favourite associate of his early studies, Charles Diodati, had died untimely. Milton did not fail to commemorate the egaging character of his friend, in a poem of pre-eminent beauties, entitled, *Epitaphium Damonis*. The time of our author's absence was one year and three months. We now behold him, at the age of thirty-two, recalled to England, from an excursion of improvement and delight, by a manly sense of what he owed to his country in a season of difficulty and danger. He procured a residence in London, as a lodger in St. Bride's Church-yard, where he received, as his disciples, the two sons of his sister, John and Edward Phillips; the latter of whom became his biographer. This lodging he soon quitted for a more spacious house and garden, in Aldersgate-street, that supplied him with conveniences for the reception of scholars. In this situation, while his countrymen were embroiled in civil war, he remained engaged in

literary and political contention. He says of himself, in his *Second Defence*, "I have avoided the toil and danger of a military life for the sake of rendering to my country assistance more useful, and not less perilous, exerting a mind never dejected in adversity, never influenced by unworthy terrors of detraction or of death; since from my infancy I had been addicted to literary pursuits and was stronger in mind than in body, declining the duties of a camp, in which any muscular common man would have surpassed me, I devoted myself to that kind of service for which I had the greatest ability." If he mistook the mode of promoting it; if his sentiments are such as the majority of our countrymen think it wise to reject, let us not withhold from his intention the merit it deserves; but respect the probity of an exalted understanding, animated by a fervent, steady, and laudable desire to enlighten mankind, and to render them more virtuous and happy. His favourite preceptor had been reduced to exile, and his father disinherited, by intolerance and superstition. He wrote, therefore, with the indignant enthusiasm of a man resenting the injuries of those, who are most entitled to his love and veneration. The fatiguing heaviness, and sometimes coarse asperity, of Milton's ecclesiastical disputes is not intended to be denied. Dr. Johnson has criticised Milton with servile, invidious, and unremitted rancour. Of his controversial humour he has selected a specimen, adding, that "his gloomy seriousness is yet more offensive. Such is his malignity that "hell grows darker at his frown." A misapplication which the friends of Milton must abhor. It is true, that our author wrote sometimes with the asperity of a man in wrath,

but he was exasperated by foes who employed against him the persecuting ferocity of fiends, or of savages thirsting for the blood of an adversary. The following is an instance selected from a polemic of the time. Milton's antagonist, supposed a son of bishop Hall, suggested to the public that he was a miscreant "who ought, in the name of Christ, to be stoned to death." During the Whitsuntide of the year 1643, at the age of thirty-five, he married Mary, the daughter of Richard Powell, of Forest-Hill, near Shotover, in Oxfordshire. This union was imprudently engaged in, for Milton found himself mistaken or disappointed. This discordant marriage, the foundation of which was differences of opinion, is supposed to have arisen from an infantine acquaintance. Under these impressions he addressed, in 1644, a work on the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.* The work was much condemned and much applauded. No desirable effect was produced from it. Milton was however disinterested in this attempt, intending warmly the public good. When the Presbyterians were oppressed, they found an advocate in Milton, but when they were invested with power, and became persecutors, he became their opponent. No selfish view seems to have entered his mind. He contended for religion without seeking emoluments from the church, and for the state, without aiming at civil or military employment. Justice and truth were the idols of his heart,—if he failed in attaining them, it arose not from sincere affection, or ardency of pursuit.

About this time he published a little *Tractate on Education* addressed to Mr. Hartlib, and his *Areopagitica,* a speech for the liberty of unlicenced printing.

The latter has been reprinted with a spirited preface by Thomson, a poet highly qualified as an editor and eulogist of Milton. In 1645 were first published his early *Poems,* both English and Latin, by Humphrey Mosely. As Milton intended to enforce his doctrine of divorce by his own example, by marrying another wife, who might not dishonour the title, he paid his addresses to the daughter of Dr. Davies, a young lady of great accomplishments. The father appears a convert to Milton's arguments, but the daughter had scruples. It is very probable that he alludes to this circumstance, in the concluding lines of enumerating the evils which arise from woman, in the *Paradise Lost,* when he says, that man sometimes

> His happiest choice too late
> shall meet, already link'd, and wedlock-bound
> to a fell adversary, his hate or shame!
> which infinite calamity shall cause
> to human life, and household peace confound."

It is likely he would, however, have overcome the scruples of his favourite, had not an extraordinary incident destroyed his intention. While on a visit at a relation's, the door of an adjoining apartment flew open: his repentant wife rushed in, fell at his feet, and implored his forgiveness. A reconciliation was the consequence. Nay, the event impressed his generous nature so much that he is said to have conceived thence the pathetic scene in which Eve addresses herself to Adam for pardon and peace.

> "Her lowly plight
> immoveable, till peace obtain'd from fault
> acknowledg'd and deplor'd, in Adam wrought
> commisseration; soon his heart relented
> towards her, his life so late and sole delight,
> now at his feet submissive in distress!
> creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,

his counsel, whom she had displeas'd, his aid;
as one disarm'd, his anger all was lost."

Milton, soon after, afforded in his house an asylum to his wife's parents, who had treated him ill by instigating her against him. They were active loyalists, and had fallen into distress by the ruin of their party. Their affairs were afterwards accommodated and they quitted that situation.

Milton was, without any application, chosen Latin Secretary to the new council of state. Serjeant Bradshaw and Sir Henry Vane, jun. were of this council. It is probable he owed his new station to the former. Soon after his appointment, he was requested by the council to counteract the effect of the celebrated book, entitled, "Icon Basilike," and in 1649, he published his *Iconoclastes.* The former work has since been discovered to be a political artifice, and not written by the king. When the celebrated Salmasius was employed to arraign the proceedings of England against Charles, the council looked up to Milton as a person capable of producing the most able vindication; and they were not disappointed, for in 1651 he published his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano,* the most elaborate of all his Latin compositions. The infirmity in his eyes was alarming at the time he began this work, notwithstanding which the ardency of his public spirit would not suffer him to abate in a subject he thought of the greatest public importance. He was obliged, however, to work only by starts. In this perilous labour he exerted his failing eyes to the utmost. In truth, to employ his own words, he

"Lost them overply'd in Liberty's defence."

He is said to have received a thousand pounds from

the parliament as a gratuity for producing that work. Among the attentions he received on this occasion the applause of the literary Christina, queen of Sweden, afforded him the highest gratification; for he ever wished to be considered a friend to good sovereigns, tho' an enemy to tyrants. In 1651, the year in which the work alluded to was published, his left eye became totally blind, and he lost the use of the other in 1654. In the same year Milton appeared again in the field of controversy, in his *Second Defence of the English People*, and in the following year in his *Autoris pro se Defensio*. The former, Mr. Hayley says, "proves that the mind of this wonderful man united to the poetic imagination of Homer the argumentative energy of Demosthenes;" adding, "it must however be allowed, that while Milton defended himself with the spirit of the Grecian orator, in imitating the eloquent Athenian he promiscuously caught both his merits and defects. It is to be regretted, that these mighty masters of rhetoric permitted so large an alloy of personal virulence to debase the dignity of national argument." In Milton's praising Cromwell he praised a man, whose matchless hypocrisy assumed before him the mask of affectionate zeal towards man, and of devout attachment to God. It was more as a saint than a hero that Cromwell deluded the generous credulity of Milton.

In May 1652, Milton lost his wife in child-bed, who left him three daughters. In 1654, when his political and personal enemies were silenced by the power of superior talents, Milton, according to his nephew Phillips, began to employ himself on three great undertakings; a voluminous Latin Dictionary, a History of England, and an Epic Poem. The first was

never brought to perfection, altho' his collection of words amounted to three folios. They were employed, however, by the compilers of the "Latin Dictionary" published at Cambridge in 1693.

Milton, tho' blind, did not remain long a widower, but married Catherine, daughter of Captain Woodcock. Within a year she gave birth to a daughter, and then followed her infant to the grave. This lady seems to have been the most tender and amiable of the poet's three wives, and is the only one immortalized by the muse of Milton, with affection.

In 1659, he published a treatise on *Civil Power in ecclesiastical Causes*, and another on *The likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church.*

In Feb. 1659, he published *The ready and easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth*, a work disapproved of even by republican writers. In 1660, he produced *Notes* on a "Sermon," by Dr. Griffith.

When the protestations of Monk to support the republic ended in his introduction of the king, the anxious friends of Milton, who thought he would be exposed to the revenge of the triumphant royalists, hurried him into concealment. It is said, they deceived his enemies by reporting his death and by a mock funeral. He had quitted his house, and did not appear in public till the act of oblivion had passed on the 29th of August. During this time the Commons expressed their resentment by ordering the attorney general to commence a prosecution against him, and by obtaining from the king permission to burn, publicly, the *Defence of the People*, and his *Answer to Eikon Basilike.* Andrew Marvell, that poet and patriot, then member for Hull, acted vigorously in behalf of his incomparable friend; not-

withstanding which, on the 13th of September Milton was seized, in consequence of the order formerly given by the Commons for his prosecution. On the 15th of December, however, the house ordered his release. An exorbitant fee was demanded on his discharge, which he resisted. Milton's political life seems to end here. On regaining his liberty, he took a house in Holborn, but soon removed to Jewin-street, and married in his 54th year, a third wife, Elizabeth Minshall, the daughter of a Cheshire gentleman. His misfortune of blindness seems to have required an affectionate companion. Various accounts are given of this woman's conduct and temper. She has been generally blamed. Aubrey, the antiquarian, knew her perfectly, and he mentions her as a gentle person and of a peaceful and agreeable humour; and Mr. Warton has remarked, that she was very attentive to her husband, and treated him with tenderness. Milton appears to have been most unfortunate in his daughters. Their cruelty and ingratitude were notorious. They combined to defraud him in the œconomy of his house, and sold several of his books. The following passage in *Samson Agonistes* appears to have reference to himself.

> "I dark in light, expos'd
> to daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
> within doors or without; still as a fool,
> in power of others, never in my own,
> scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half."

His new connection seems to have produced to him that portion of domestic tranquillity and comfort necessary to his perseverance in study; for his literary pursuits were undoubtedly the prime objects of his life; and these he pursued through every vicissitude of fortune. Neither confiscation of property on the

restoration, his infirmities, domestic unhappiness, nor the varied evils which beset him, had power to depress his firmness and vigour of mind. In 1661, he published a little work entitled, *Accidence commenced Grammar*, calculated to shorten the tediousness of learning the Latin language. He published, in the same year, "A Series of political Maxims," the composition of Sir Walter Raleigh. Richardson relates, that the post of Latin Secretary was offered again to him by Charles II, but he rejected it. When his wife pressed him to accept of it, he replied, "You, like other women, wish to ride in your coach; as for me, my aim is to live and die an honest man." It cannot be supposed that Milton could accept of an office under a profligate and servile tyrant; a king careless of his own honour and that of the nation; a king extolled for his mercy, but who practised on a subject one of the most inhuman and detestible acts that ever disgraced a sovereign. He had granted the life of Sir Henry Vane to the joint petition of the Lords and Commons, and, after promising to preserve him, signed a warrant for his execution!

The time of publishing *Samson Agonistes* has not been ascertained. "If, in reading that work, we observe," says Mr. Hayley, "how many passages, expressed with the most energetic sensibility, exhibit to our fancy the sufferings and real sentiments of the poet, as well as those of his hero, we may derive from this extraordinary composition a kind of pathetic delight which no other drama can afford; we may applaud the felicity of genius, that contrived, in this manner, to relieve a heart overburthened with anguish and indignation, and to pay a half-concealed, yet hallowed, tribute to

the memories of dear tho' dishonoured friends, whom the state of the times allowed not the afflicted poet more openly to deplore. He did not design this piece for a theatre, nor has it the kind of action requisite for theatrical interest: but in one point of view the *Samson Agonistes* is the most singularly affecting composition that was ever produced by sensibility of heart or vigour of imagination. To give it this peculiar effect, we must remember, that the lot of Milton had a marvellous coincidence with that of his hero, in three remarkable points; first, he had been tormented by a beautiful but disaffectionate and disobedient wife; secondly, he had been the great champion of his country, and as such, the idol of public admiration; lastly, he had fallen from that height of unrivalled glory, and had experienced the most humiliating reverse of fortune:

"His foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind."

Under these considerations the *Samson Agonistes* is certainly the most interesting of all his poetical works. Thomas Ellwood, a quaker, was introduced to Milton, as a young reader of Latin; he frequently resorted to Milton's house to read, and hence was derived a mutual advantage, for Milton taught him the Italian pronunciation, and encouraged him in learning as much as he could. In the clear and simple narrative of his own life, Ellwood has given us several particulars relating to Milton. An affluent quaker of Chafont in Buckinghamshire, having settled Ellwood in his family, in 1665, when the pestilence raged in London, Milton requested his friendly disciple to find him a refuge in his neighbourhood. It was in this place that he completed his incomparable *Paradise Lost*. He

lent it in manuscript to Ellwood to read. When he returned it, Milton asked how he liked it, and what he thought of it. Ellwood, after speaking freely concerning it, pleasantly said, "Thou hast said much here of Paradise lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise found?" It is said this hint gave birth to the composition of *Paradise Regain'd.*

On Milton's return to London, in 1667, his *Paradise Lost* was printed by Peter Parker. He sold the copy to Samuel Simmons for five pounds in hand, five pounds more when 1300 copies should be sold, and the same sum on the publication of the second and of the third editions. The number of each was limited to 1500 copies. Of this agreement Milton received in all fifteen pounds; and his widow, afterwards sold her claims for eight! In this manner twenty-eight pounds was received, in thirteen years, for a work the very master-piece of sublime and refined imagination. Yet, altho' our author's emolument was so deplorably inadequate to the merit of his work, he was abundantly gratified by the fervent applauses of several very competent judges of poetical genius; particularly Denham, Dryden, and Marvel. It is pleasing to reflect, that after sustaining a life chequered by many evils, he experienced the gratification of being assured that he had succeeded in the principal object of his literary ambition, an atchievement which he had projected in his youth.

It is an objection, that the plan of the *Paradise Lost* contains no human action, nothing in which the reader can suppose himself engaged, and the man and woman are different from all others. In the year 1670, our author produced an eloquent and impartial *History of England,* beginning with the

most early fabulous period, and closing with the Norman conquest. In 1671, he published the *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regain'd.* It is said that Milton preferred the latter to his great epic poem, a preference in which he remains alone; since it is obscured by the splendour of *Paradise Lost,* as the lustre of the morning star is absorbed by the meridian blaze. Alarmed by the encroachment of Roman superstition, under the connivance of Charles II, Milton published, in 1673, *A Treatise of true Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the best Means to prevent the growth of Popery.* In the same year he reprinted his *Smaller Poems,* with the *Tractate on Education;* and in the year following, the last of his indefatigable life, he published his *Familiar Letters,* and *A Declaration of the Poles in praise of their heroic Sovereign, John Sobieski, translated from the Latin original.* A brief *History of Moscovia,* which appears to have been compiled during the early parts of his life, was published a few years after his death. Two of his compositions have probably perished; *A System of Theology,* in Latin; and an *Answer to a scurrilous Libel,* on himself.

For some years he had suffered much from the gout, and in July 1674, he felt so strongly the approaches of disorder, that he turned his thoughts towards the resignation of life. Respecting the disposal of his property, he dictated to his brother Christopher, then a bencher in the Inner Temple, as follows: "Brother," said he, "the portion due to me from Mr. Powell, my first wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her; but I have received no part of it; and my will and meaning is, they shall have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion, and

what I have besides done for them, they having been very undutiful to me; and all the residue of my estate I leave to the disposal of Elizabeth, my loving wife." Such is the brief testament of John Milton, who expired on Sunday night the 15th of November, 1674, at a house in the Artillery-walk, leading to Bunhill-fields, whither he had removed from Jewin-street, soon after his marriage in 1661; "a spot," says Mr. Hayley, "where he resided in that period of his days, when he was peculiarly entitled to veneration; here he probably finished three of his most admirable works; and where, with a dissolution so perfectly easy that it was unperceived by the persons in his chamber, he closed a life, clouded indeed by uncommon and various calamities, yet ennobled by the constant exercise of such rare endowments as render his name, perhaps, the first in that radiant and comprehensive list, of which England, the most fertile of countries in the produce of mental power, has reason to be proud." A numerous concourse of Milton's friends and others, accompanied his body to the church of St. Giles, near Cripplegate, where he lies buried in the chancel. To the discredit of our country, she has failed to pay the decent tribute of raising a monument to the memory of a man from whose genius she has derived glory. Mr. Benson, in the year 1737, placed a bust of Milton in Westminster Abbey, under which is the following inscription.

In the year of our Lord Christ
one thousand seven hundred and thirtyseven,
this bust
of the Author of Paradise Lost,
was placed here by William Benson, esquire;
one of the two auditors of the imprests

to his Majesty King George the second.
Formerly
Surveyor-general of the works
to his Majesty King George the first.
Rysbrack
was the statuary who cut it.

In this inscription Mr. Benson and Mr. Rysbrack appear much more conspicuous than Milton.

On Poets' tombs see Benson's titles writ!—*Dunciad.*

On the removal of the fence before this monument, the town was disappointed, and the world ever since surprised that the eulogium paid to Milton by Dryden was omitted.

Three poets in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn:
the first in loftiness of thought surpass'd;
the next in majesty; in both, the last.
The force of nature could no farther go;
to make a third, she join'd the former two.

Milton's will was contested by his daughters as deficient in form, was set aside, and letters of administration granted to the widow, who is said to have allotted to the daughters one hundred pounds each. The entire sum he left was £1500 in money, besides his household furniture. Milton was of moderate stature, and not particularly slender. He always wore a sword, and had practised fencing with great assiduity. When turned of forty, he had the appearance of being ten years younger than his real age. His eyes, tho' utterly deprived of sight, did not betray their imperfection. "His harmonical and ingenuous soul," says Aubrey, "dwelt in a beautiful and well-proportioned body." His hair was a light brown, his eyes dark gray, and his complexion fair. "His deportment," says Anthony Wood, "was affable, and

his gait erect and manly, bespeaking courage and undauntedness. The youngest daughter of Milton was for some time his amanuensis. Johnson has represented Milton as a domestic tyrant. This daughter is the only one who has given an account of her father's domestic conduct. "She spoke of him," says Richardson, "with great tenderness; said, he was delightful company, the life of conversation; and that on account of a flow of subject, and an unaffected cheerfulness and civility." This daughter related that she and her sisters read to their father several languages which they did not understand; but she did not speak of it as a hardship. Such an employment, however, must have been irksome; and the considerate father found it so, and sent them out to learn embroideries, and other ingenious sorts of manufacture. "It is barbarous," says Mr. Hayley, "to arraign the poet for domestic cruelty; because he appears to have suffered from the singular tenderness and generosity of his nature. He had reason to lament that excess of indulgence, with which he forgave and received again his long-alienated wife, since their reunion not only disquieted his days, but gave birth to daughters, who seem to have inherited the perversity of their mother." Of our poet's studious habits, he rose at four in summer, at five in winter, and began each day by hearing a chapter in the Hebrew Bible; the man who read, then left him to meditation, and returning at seven, either read or wrote for him till twelve; he then allowed himself an hour for exercise, which was usually walking, and when he grew blind, he had recourse to a swing. After an early and temperate dinner (for he was abstemious in his diet, and disliked all strong liquors)

he commonly allotted some time to music, his favourite amusement, sometimes playing upon the organ, and sometimes upon the violincello. He had also the advantage of an agreeable voice. His regular custom was to indulge himself in musical relaxation after food. Sir William Jones, in the third volume of the "Asiatic Researches," recommends this practice of Milton. It is said to be favourable to mental exertion, in producing all the good effects of sleep, without it's disadvantages. "The very wonderful mind of Johnson," says Mr. Hayley, "was so imbittered by prejudice, that in delineating a character confessedly pre-eminent in eminent accomplishments, in genius, and in piety, he perpetually endeavours to represent him as unamiable, and instead of attributing any mistaken opinions that he might entertain to such sources as charity and reason conspire to suggest, imputes them to supposed vices in his mind, most foreign to his nature, and the very worst that an enemy could imagine. Milton, adorned with every graceful endowment, highly and holily accomplished as he was, appears, in the dark colouring of Johnson, a most unamiable being." Johnson says, in his "Lives of the Poets," that Milton "wrote no language, but formed a Babylonish dialect, harsh, and barbarous:" he says also in his "Rambler," that our poet "excelled as much in the lower as in the higher parts of his art, and that his skill in harmony was not less than his invention or his learning!" A contradiction so palpable as this requires no comment. "It must be lamented," adds Mr. Hayley, "that a moralist, who, has given us, in the "Rambler," such sublime lessons for the discipline of the heart and mind, should be unable to preserve his

own from that acrimonious spirit of detraction, which led him to depreciate, to the utmost of his power, the rare abilities, and perhaps still rarer integrity of Milton. We might believe that Johnson's rancour against an unanswerable champion of civil liberty was merely political, had he not appeared as the biographer of another illustrious republican; but when we find him representing as honourable in Blake the very principles and conduct which he endeavours to make infamous and contemptible in Milton, can we fail to observe, that he renders not the same justice to the heart of the great republican author which he had nobly rendered to the gallant admiral of the republic. To Blake he generously assigns the praise of intrepidity, honesty, contempt of wealth, and love of his country. Assuredly these virtues were as eminent in Milton." To our poet, nature had been prodigal, and his perseverance in study and discipline had been ardent. In infancy a thirst of glory became a passion; in youth he was temperate; and arriving at manhood, he began to build a lofty name on a foundation the most secure.

> "He all his study bent
> to worship God aright, and know his works
> not hid; nor those things last that might preserve
> freedom and peace to men."

Yet, with a judgment just and penetrating, an apprehension quick, a memory tenacious, and a genius universal, not to have had some faults and misfortunes to be laid in the balance, would have been a portion too great for humanity.

EXTRACTS FROM PARADISE LOST.

Invocation to Light, with Reflections on it's Loss.

Hail, holy light! offspring of Heaven first-born,
or of th' Eternal coeternal beam,
may I express thee' unblam'd? Since God is light,
and never but in unapproached light
dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,
bright effluence of bright essence increate.
Or hear'st thou rather, pure ethereal stream,
whose fountain who shall tell? before the sun,
before the heavens thou wert, and at the voice
of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
the rising world of waters dark and deep,
won from the void and formless infinite.
——————Thee I revisit safe,
and feel thy sovran vital lamp; but thou
revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
to find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
so thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs,
or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more
cease I to wander where the Muses haunt,
clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
that wash thy hallow'd feet, and warbling flow,
nightly I visit: nor sometimes forget
those other two equall'd with me in fate,
so were I equall'd with them in renown,

blind Thamyris and blind Mæonides,
and Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old:
then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
seasons return, but not to me returns
day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
but cloud instead, and ever-during dark
surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
presented with a universal blank
of nature's works, to me expung'd and rais'd,
and wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, celestial light,
shine inward, and the mind through all her power
irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
purge and disperse. *b.* 3.

Description of Adam and Eve.

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
godlike erect, with native honour clad
in naked majesty seem'd lords of all,
and worthy seem'd; for in their looks divine
the image of their glorious Maker shone,
truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure;
(severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd),
whence true authority in men; tho' both
not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd;

for contemplation he and valour form'd;
for softness she, and sweet attractive grace;
he for God only, she for God in him:
his fair large front and eye sublime declar'd
absolute rule; and hyacinthine locks
round from his parted forelock manly hung
clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad:
she as a veil down to the slender waist
her unadorned golden tresses wore
dishevel'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
as the vine curls her tendrils, which imply'd
subjection, but requir'd with gentle sway,
and by her yielded, by him best receiv'd,
yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
and sweet reluctant amorous delay.
Nor those mysterious parts were then conceal'd;
then was not guilty shame, dishonest shame
of Nature's works; honour dishonourable,
sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
with shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
and banish'd from man's life, his happiest life,
simplicity and spotless innocence!
So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight
of God or angel, for they thought no ill;
so hand in hand they pass'd, the lovliest pair
that ever since in love's embraces met;
Adam the goodliest man of men since born
his sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve.
Under a tuft of shade that on a green
stood whisp'ring soft, by a fresh fountain side
they sat them down; and after no more toil
of their sweet gard'ning labour then suffic'd
to recommend cool zephyr, and made ease
more easy, welcome thirst and appetite

more grateful, to their supper fruits they fell,
nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
yielded them, side-long as they sat recline
on the soft downy bank damask'd with flowers:
the savory pulp they chew, and in the rind
still as they thirsted scoop the brimming stream;
nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
wanted, nor youthful dalliance as beseems
fair couple, link'd in happy nuptial league,
alone as they. About them frisking play'd
all beasts of th' earth, since wild, and of all chase
in wood or wilderness, forest or den;
sporting the lion ramp'd, and in his paw
dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
gambol'd before them; th' unwieldy elephant
to make them mirth us'd all his might, and wreath'd
his lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly
insinuating, wove with Gordian twine
his braided train, and of his fatal guile
gave proof unheeded; others on the grass
couch'd, and now fill'd with pasture gazing sat,
or bedward ruminating; for the sun
declin'd was hasting now with prone career
to th' ocean isles, and in th' ascending scale
of heaven the stars that usher evening rose. *b. v.*

Adam's Speech to Eve. Eve's Reply, relating to the Tree of Knowledge.

" Sole partner, and sole part, of all these joys,
dearer thyself than all; needs must the Power,
that made us, and for us this ample world,

be infinitely good, and of his good
as liberal and free as infinite;
that rais'd us from the dust, and plac'd us here
in all this happiness, who at his hand
have nothing merited, nor can perform
aught whereof he hath need, he who requires
from us no other service than to keep
this one, this easy charge, of all the trees
in Paradise that bear delicious fruit
so various, not to taste that only tree
of Knowledge, planted by the tree of Life;
so near grows death to life, whate'er death is,
some dreadful thing, no doubt; for well thou know'st
God hath pronounc'd it death to taste that tree,
the only sign of our obedience left
among so many signs of power and rule
conferred upon us, and dominion given
over all other creatures that possess
earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard
one easy prohibition, who enjoy
free leave so large to all things else, and choice
unlimited of manifold delights:
but let us ever praise him, and extol
his bounty, following our delightful task
to prune these growing plants; and tend these flowers,
which were it toilsome yet with thee were sweet."

To whom thus Eve reply'd; "O thou for whom
and from whom I was form'd flesh of thy flesh,
and without whom am to no end, my guide
and head, what thou hast said is just and right.
For we to him, indeed, all praises owe,
and daily thanks; I chiefly, who enjoy
so far the happier lot, enjoying thee
pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou

like consort to thyself canst no where find.
That day I oft remember, when from sleep
I first awak'd, and found myself repos'd
under a shade, on flowers, much wond'ring where
and what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
of waters issued from a cave, and spread
into a liquid plain, then stood unmov'd
pure as the expanse of heaven; I thither went
with unexperienc'd thought, and laid me down
on the green bank, to look into the clear
smooth lake, that to me seem'd another sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite
a shape within the wat'ry gleam appear'd,
bending to look on me: I started back,
it started back; but pleas'd I soon return'd;
pleas'd it return'd as soon with answering looks
of sympathy and love; there I had fix'd
mine eyes till now, and pin'd with vain desire,
had not a voice thus warn'd me: 'What thou seest,
what there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
with thee it came and goes: but follow me,
and I will bring thee where no shadow stays
thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy
inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
multitudes like thyself, and thence be call'd
mother of human race.' What could I do,
but follow strait, invisibly thus led?
till I espy'd thee, fair indeed and tall,
under a platane; yet methought less fair,
less winning soft, less amiably mild,
than that smooth watry image: back I turn'd;
thou following cry'dst aloud, "Return, fair Eve;

whom fly'st thou! whom thou fly'st, of him thou art,
his flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
substantial life, to have thee by my side
henceforth an individual solace dear;
part of my soul, I seek thee, and thee claim
my other half; with that thy gentle hand
seiz'd mine; I yielded, and from that time see
how beauty is excell'd by manly grace
and wisdom which alone is truly fair."

So spake our general Mother, and with eyes
of conjugal attraction unreprov'd,
and meek surrender, half embracing lean'd
on our first father; half her swelling breast
naked met his, under the flowing gold
of her loose tresses hid: he in delight
both of her beauty and submissive charms
smil'd with superior love, and press'd her matron lip
with kisses pure—— *b.* 4.

Discourse of Adam with Eve on retiring to Rest.

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
they to their grassy couch, these to their nests
were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
she all night long her amorous descant sung;
Silence was pleas'd: now glow'd the firmament
with living sapphires: Hesperus, that led
the starry host, rode brightest, till the moon,
rising in clouded majesty, at length

apparent queen unveil'd her peerless light,
and o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

When Adam thus to Eve: "Fair Consort, the hour
of night, and all things now retir'd to rest,
mind us of like repose, since God hath set
labour and rest, as day and night to men
successive; and the timely dew of sleep
now falling with soft slumbrous weight inclines
our eye-lids: other creatures all day long
rove idle unemploy'd, and less need rest;
man hath his daily work of body' or mind
appointed, which declares his dignity,
and the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
while other animals unactive range,
and of their doings God takes no account.
To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east
with fresh approach of light, we must be risen,
and at our pleasant labour, to reform
yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
our walk at noon, with branches overgrown,
that mock our scant manuring, and require
more hands than our's to lop their wanton growth:
those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
that lie bestrown unsightly and unsmooth,
ask riddance if we mean to tread with ease;
mean while, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest."

To whom thus Eve with perfect beauty' adorn'd:
"My author and disposer, what thou bid'st
unargu'd I obey; so God ordains;
God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.
With thee conversing I forget all time;
all seasons and their change, all please alike.
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,

with charm of earliest birds; pleasant the sun,
when first on this delightful land he spreads
his orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
glist'ring with dew; fragrant the fertile earth
after soft showers; and sweet the coming on
of grateful evening mild; then silent night
with this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
and these the gems of heaven, her starry train:
but neither breath of morn when she ascends
with charm of earliest birds; nor rising sun
on this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
glist'ring with dew; nor fragrance after showers;
nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night
with this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
or glitt'ring star-light, without thee is sweet.
But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
this glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"

To whom our general ancestor reply'd:
"Daughter of God and man, accomplish'd Eve,
these have their course to finish round the earth
by morrow evening, and from land to land
in order, tho' to nations yet unborn,
minist'ring light prepar'd, they set and rise:
lest total darkness should by night regain
her old possession, and extinguish life
in nature and all things, which these soft fires
not only' enlighten, but with kindly heat
of various influence, foment and warm,
temper or nourish, or in part shed down
their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
on earth, made hereby apter to receive
perfection from the sun's more potent ray.
These then, tho' unbeheld in deep of night,
shine not in vain; nor think, tho' men were none,

that heaven would want spectators, God want praise:
millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep:
all these with ceaseless praise his works behold
both day and night."——

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they pass'd
on to their blissful bower; it was a place
chosen by the sovran Planter, when he fram'd
all things to man's delightful use; the roof
of thickest covert was in woven shade
laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
acanthus, and each odorous bushy shrub
fenc'd up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,
rear'd high their flourish'd heads between, & wrought
mosaic; under foot the violet,
crocus, and hyancinth, with rich inlay
broider'd the ground, more colour'd than with stone
of costliest emblem: other creature here,
beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none,
such was their awe of man. In shadier bower
more sacred and sequester'd, tho' but feign'd,
Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph,
nor Faunus haunted. Here, in close recess
with flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
espoused Eve deck'd first her nuptial bed,
and heavenly choirs the hymenæan sung,
what day the genial angel to our sire
brought her in naked beauty more adorn'd,
more lovely than Pandora, whom the gods
endow'd with all their gifts.

Thus at their shady lodge arriv'd, both stood,
both turn'd, and under open sky ador'd

the God that made both sky, air, earth and heaven,
which they beheld, the moon's resplendent globe,
and starry pole: "Thou also mad'st the night,
Maker Omnipotent, and thou the day,
which we in our appointed work employ'd
have finish'd, happy in our mutual help
and mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
ordain'd by thee, and this delicious place
for us too large, where thy abundance wants
partakers, and uncropt falls to the ground.
But thou hast promis'd from us two a race
to fill the earth, who shall with us extol
thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
and when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep."

This said unanimous, and other rites
observing none, but adoration pure
which God likes best, into their inmost bower
handed they went: and, eas'd the putting off
these troublesome disguises which we wear,
strait side by side were laid; nor turn'd I ween
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
mysterious of connubial love refus'd:
whatever hypocrites austerely talk
of purity, and place, and innocence,
defaming as impure what God declares
pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase: who bids abstain
but our Destroyer, foe to God and man?
Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source
of human offspring, sole propriety
in Paradise of all things common else.
By thee adulterous Lust was driven from men
among the bestial herds to range; by thee
founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,

relations dear, and all the charites
of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,
or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
whose bed is undefil'd and chaste pronounc'd,
present, or past, as saints and patriarchs us'd.
Here Love his golden shafts employs, here lights
his constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
casual fruition; nor in court amours,
mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
of serenate; which the starv'd lover sings
to his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
These lull'd by nightingales embracing slept,
and on their naked limbs the flowery roof
shower'd roses, which the morn repair'd. Sleep on,
blest pair; and O yet happiest, if ye seek
no happier state, and know to know no more.

b. 4.

Adam's Salutation. Eve's Relation of her Dream. Adam's Answer. Their Morning Orisons.

Now morn her rosy steps in the' eastern clime
advancing sow'd the earth with orient pearl,
when Adam wak'd, so custom'd; for his sleep
was aery-light from pure digestion bred,
and temperate vapours bland, which the' only sound
of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song
of birds on every bough; so much the more
his wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve,

with tresses discompos'd, and glowing cheek,
as through unquiet rest: he on his side
leaning half rais'd, with looks of cordial love
hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
beauty, which whether waking or asleep,
shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus. "Awake,
my fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,
heaven's last best gift, my ever new delight,
awake; the morning shines, and the fresh field
calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
our tended plants, how blows the citron grove,
what drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
how Nature paints her colours, how the bee
sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet."
Such whisp'ring wak'd her, but with startled eye
on Adam, whom embracing, thus she spoke:
"O sole, in whom my thoughts find all repose,
my glory, my perfection, glad I see
thy face, and morn return'd; for I this night
(such night till this I never pass'd) have dream'd,
if dream'd, not as I oft am wont, of thee,
works of day past, or morrow's next design,
but of offence and trouble, which my mind
knew never till this irksome night: methought
close at mine ear one call'd me forth to walk
with gentle voice; I thought it thine; it said,
'Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,
the cool, the silent, save where silence yields
to the night-warbling bird, that now awake
tunes sweetest his love-labour'd song; now reigns
full orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light
shadowy sets off the face of things, in vain,

if none regard; heaven wakes with all his eyes,
whom to behold but thee, nature's desire?
in whose sight all things joy with ravishment
attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.'
I rose as at thy call, but found thee not;
to find thee I directed then my walk;
and on, methought, alone I pass'd through ways
that brought me on a sudden to the tree
of interdicted Knowledge: fair it seem'd,
much fairer to my fancy than by day:
and as I wond'ring look'd, beside it stood
one shap'd and wing'd like one of those from heaven
by us oft seen; his dewy locks distill'd
ambrosia; on that tree he also gaz'd;
and 'O! fair plant,' said he, 'with fruit surcharg'd,
deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
nor God, nor man? is knowledge so despis'd?
or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
longer thy offer'd good, why else set here?
This said, he paus'd not, but with venturous arm
he pluck'd, he tasted; me damp horror chill'd
at such bold words vouch'd with a deed so bold:
but he thus overjoy'd, 'O fruit divine,
sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropt,
forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
for gods, yet able to make gods of men:
and why not gods of men; since good, the more
communicated, more abundant grows,
the Author nor impair'd, but honour'd more?
Here happy creature, fair angelic Eve!
partake thou also; happy tho' thou art,
happier thou may'st be, worthier canst not be:
taste this, and be henceforth among the gods

thyself a goddess, not to earth confin'd,
but sometimes in the air, as we, sometimes
ascend to heaven, by merit thine, and see
what life the gods live there, and such live thou.'
So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
e'en to my mouth of that same fruit held part
which he had pluck'd; the pleasant savory smell
so quicken'd appetite, that I, methought,
could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
with him I flew, and underneath beheld
the earth outstretch'd immense, a prospect wide
and various: wond'ring at my flight and change
to this high exaltation, suddenly
my guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
and fell asleep; but O how glad I wak'd
to find this but a dream!" Thus Eve her night
related, and thus Adam answer'd sad:

"Best image of myself and dearer half,
the trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
affects me equally; nor can I like
this uncouth dream, of evil sprung, I fear;
yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,
created pure. But know that in the soul
are many lesser faculties, that serve
Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
her office holds; of all external things,
which the five watchful senses represent,
she forms imaginations, airy shapes,
which Reason joining or disjoining, frames
all what we' affirm or what deny, and call
our knowledge or opinion; then retires
into her private cell when Nature rests.
Oft in her absence mimic Fancy wakes
to imitate her; but misjoining shapes,

wild works produces oft, and most in dreams,
ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
Some such resemblances methinks I find
of our last evening's talk in this thy dream,
but with addition strange; yet be not sad.
Evil into the mind of God or man
may come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
no spot or blame behind; which gives me hope
that what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
waking thou never wilt consent to do.
Be not dishearten'd then, nor cloud those looks,
that wont to be more cheerful and serene
than when fair Morning first smiles on the world;
and let us to our fresh employments rise
among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers
that open now their choicest bosom'd smells,
reserv'd from night, and kept for thee in store."

So cheer'd he his fair spouse, and she was cheer'd,
but silently a gentle tear let fall
from either eye, and wip'd them with her hair;
two other precious drops, that ready stood,
each in their crystal sluce, he ere they fell
kiss'd, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
and pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.

So all was clear'd, and to the field they haste.
But first, from under shady arb'rous roof,
soon as they forth were come to open sight
of day-spring, and the sun, who, scarce up-risen,
with wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean-brim,
shot parallel to th' earth his dewy ray,
discovering in wide landscape all the east
of Paradise and Eden's happy plains,
lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
their orisons, each morning duly paid

in various style; for neither various style
nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
their Maker, in fit strains pronounc'd or sung
unmeditated, such prompt eloquence
flow'd from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,
more tuneable than needed lute or harp
to add more sweetness; and they thus began:

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty, thine this universal frame,
thus wonderous fair! thyself how wonderous then!
unspeakable, who sit'st above these heavens
to us invisible, or dimly seen
in these thy lowest works; yet these declare
thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
Speak ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
angels; for ye behold him, and with songs
and choral symphonies, day without night,
circle his throne rejoicing; ye in heaven,
on earth join all ye creatures to extol
him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
if better thou belong not to the dawn,
sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
with thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere,
while day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou Sun of this great world both eye and soul,
acknowledge him thy greater, sound his praise
in thy eternal course, both when thou clim'st,
and when high noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st.
Moon that now meet'st the orient sun now fly'st
with the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies,
and ye five other wand'ring fires that move
in mystic dance, not without song, resound
his praise, who out of darkness call'd up light.

Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth
of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run
perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
and nourish all things; let your ceaseless change
vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations that now rise
from hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray,
till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
in honour to the world's great Author rise,
whether to deck with clouds th' uncolour'd sky,
or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
rising or falling still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
with every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble, as ye flow,
melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
Join voices all ye living souls: ye birds,
that, singing, up to heaven gate ascend,
bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
the earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep;
witness if I be silent, morn or even,
to hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail! universal Lord, be bounteous still
to give us only good; and if the night
have gather'd aught of evil or conceal'd,
disperse it, as now light dispels the dark!"

So pray'd they innocent, and to their thoughts
firm peace recover'd soon and wonted calm.
On to their morning's rural work they haste
among sweet dews and flowers; where any row
of fruit-trees over woody reach'd too far

their pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check
fruitless embraces: or they led the vine
to wed her elm; she, spous'd, about him twines
her marriageable arms, and with her brings
her dower, th' adopted clusters to adorn
his barren leaves.——— *book 5.*

Adam's Account of himself, and of his Nuptials with Eve.

——New wak'd from soundest sleep
soft on the flowery herb I found me laid
in balmy sweat, which with his beams the sun
soon dry'd, and on the reeking moisture fed.
Strait toward heaven my wond'ring eyes I turn'd,
and gaz'd awhile the ample sky, till rais'd
by quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
as thitherward endeavouring, and upright
stood on my feet; about me round I saw
hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
and liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,
creatures that liv'd and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew;
birds on the branches warbling; all things smil'd;
with fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflow'd.
Myself I then perus'd, and limb by limb
survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
with supple joints, as lively vigour led:
but who I was, or where, or from what cause,
knew not: to speak I try'd, and forthwith spake;
my tongue obey'd, and readily could name
whate'er I saw. 'Thou sun,' said I, 'fair light,
and thou enlighten'd earth, so fresh and gay,
ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods and plains,

and ye that live and move, fair creatures tell,
tell, if ye saw how came I thus, how here?
Not of myself; by some great maker then,
in goodness and in power pre-eminent;
tell me, how may I know him, how adore
from whom I have that thus I move and live,
and feel that I am happier than I know?'
While thus I call'd, and stray'd I knew not whither,
from where I first drew air, and first beheld
this happy light, when answer none return'd,
on a green shady bank profuse of flowers
pensive I sat me down; there gentle sleep
first found me, and with soft oppression seiz'd
my droused sense, untroubled though I thought
I then was passing to my former state,
insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:
when suddenly stood at my head a dream,
whose inward apparition gently mov'd
my fancy to believe I yet had being,
and liv'd: one came, methought of shape divine,
and said, 'Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
first man, of men innumerable ordain'd
first father; call'd by thee, I come thy guide
to the Garden of Bliss, thy seat prepar'd.'
So saying, by the hand he took me rais'd,
and over fields and waters, as in air
smooth sliding without step, last led me up
a woody mountain, whose high top was plain,
a circuit wide, inclos'd, with goodliest trees
planted, with walks and bowers; that what I saw
of earth before scarce pleasant seem'd. Each tree
loaden with fairest fruit that hung to th' eye
tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite

to pluck and eat; whereat I wak'd and found
before mine eyes all real, as the dream
had lively shadow'd: here had new begun
my wandering, had not he who was my guide
up hither from among the trees appear'd,
presence divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
in adoration at his feet I fell [am,'
submiss: he rear'd me, and 'Whom thou sought'st I
said mildly, 'Author of all this thou seest
above, or round about thee, or beneath.
This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
to till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:
of every tree that in the garden grows
eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:
but of the tree whose operation brings
knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
the pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
amid the garden by the tree of life,
remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,
and shun the bitter consequence: for know
the day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
transgress'd inevitably thou shalt die,
from that day mortal, and this happy state
shalt lose, expell'd from hence into a world
of woe and sorrow.' Sternly he pronounc'd
the rigid interdiction, which resounds
yet dreadful in mine ear, tho' in my choice
not to incur; but soon his clear aspéct
return'd, and gracious purpose thus renew'd:
Not only these fair bounds, but all the earth
to thee and to thy race I give; as lords
possess it, and all things that therein live,
or live in sea, or air; beast, fish, and fowl.
In sign whereof each bird and beast behold

after their kinds; I bring them to receive
from thee their names, and pay thee fealty
with low subjection; understand the same
of fish within their wat'ry residence,
not hither summon'd, since they cannot change
their element to draw the thinner air.'
As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
approaching two and two, these cow'ring low,
with blandishment, each bird stoop'd on his wing.
I nam'd them as they pass'd, and understood
their nature, with such knowledge God endu'd
my sudden apprehension: but in these
I found not what methought I wanted still;
and to the heavenly Vision thus presum'd:

'O by what name, for thou above all these,
above mankind, or aught that mankind higher,
surpassest far my naming, how may I
adore thee, author of this universe,
and all this good to man? for whose well-being
so amply, and with hand so liberal,
thou hast provided all things: but with me
I see not who partakes. In solitude
what happiness? who can enjoy alone,
or all enjoying, what contentment find?'
Thus I presumptuous: and the Vision bright,
as with a smile more brighten'd, thus reply'd:

'What call'st thou solitude? is not the earth
with various living creatures, and the air
replenish'd, and all these at thy command
to come and play before thee? know'st thou not
their language and their ways? they also know,
and reason not contemptibly; with these
find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large.'
So spake the universal Lord, and seem'd

so ordering. I with leave of speech implor'd,
and humble deprecation thus reply'd:

'Let not my words offend thee, heavenly Power,
my Maker, be propitious while I speak.
Hast not thou made me here thy substitute,
and these inferior far beneath me set?
Among unequals what society
can sort, what harmony or true delight?
which must be mutual, in proportion due
given and receiv'd; but in disparity
the one intense, the other still remiss
cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
tedious alike: of fellowship I speak,
such as I seek, fit to participate
all rational delight, wherein the brute
cannot be human consort; they rejoice
each with their kind, lion with lioness,
so fitly them in pairs thou hast combin'd;
much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl
so well converse, nor with the ox the ape;
worse then can man with beast, and least of all.

Whereto th' Almighty answer'd, not displeas'd:

'A nice and subtile happiness I see
thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
of thy associates, Adam, and wilt taste
no pleasure, tho' in pleasure, solitary.
What think'st thou then of me, and this my state?
seem I to thee sufficiently possess'd
of happiness, or not? who am alone
from all eternity, for none I know
second to me or like, equal much less.
How have I then with whom to hold convérse,
save with the creatures which I made, and those
to me inferior, infinite descents

beneath what other creatures are to thee?

He ceas'd, I lowly answer'd: 'To attain
the height and depth of thy eternal ways
all human thoughts come short, Supreme of things;
thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
is no deficience found: not so is man,
but in degree; the cause of his desire
by conversation with his like to help,
or solace his defects. No need that thou
shouldst propagate, already infinite,
and through all numbers absolute, tho' one;
but man by number is to manifest
his single imperfection, and beget
like of his like, his image multiply'd,
in unity defective, which requires
collateral love, and dearest amity.
Thou in thy secresy, altho' alone,
best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not
social communication, yet so pleas'd,
canst raise thy creature to what height thou wilt
of union or communion, deify'd;
I by conversing cannot these erect
from prone, nor in their ways complacence find.'
Thus I embolden'd spake, and freedom us'd
permissive, and acceptance found, which gain'd
this answer from the gracious voice divine:

'Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleas'd,
and find thee knowing, not of beasts alone,
which thou had rightly nam'd, but of thyself,
expressing well the spirit within thee free,
my image, not imparted to the brute,
whose fellowship therefore unmeet for thee
good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike,
and be so minded still: I, ere thou spak'st,

knew it not good for man to be alone,
and no such company as then thou saw'st
intended thee, for trial only brought,
to see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet:
what next I bring shall please thee, be assur'd;
thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.'

He ended, or I heard no more; for now
my earthly by his heavenly overpower'd,
which it had long stood under, strain'd to th' height
in that celestial colloquy sublime,
as with an object that excels the sense
dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd
by nature as in aid, and clos'd mine eyes.
Mine eyes he clos'd, but open left the cell
of fancy, my internal sight, by which
abstract, as in a trance, methought I saw,
tho' sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape
still glorious before whom awake I stood:
who stooping open'd my left side, and took
from thence a rib, with cordial spirits warm,
and life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
but suddenly with flesh fill'd up and heal'd:
the rib he form'd and fashion'd with his hands;
under his forming hands a creature grew
manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair,
that what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now
mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd.
And in her looks, which from that time infus'd
sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
and into all things from her air inspir'd
the spirit of love and amorous delight.
She disappear'd, and left me dark; I wak'd

to find her, or for ever to deplore
her loss, and other pleasures all abjure:
when out of hope, behold her, not far off,
such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
with what all earth or heaven could bestow
to make her amiable: on she came,
led by her heavenly Maker, tho' unseen,
and guided by his voice, nor uninform'd
of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites:
grace was in all her steps, heaven in her eye,
in every gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud:

'This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill'd
thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
giver of all things fair, but fairest this
of all thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see
bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself
before me; Woman is her name, of man
extracted; for this cause he shall forego
father and mother, and to his wife adhere;
and they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul.'

She heard me thus; and tho' divinely brought,
yet innocence and virgin modesty,
her virtue and the conscience of her worth,
that would be woo'd, and not unsought be won,
not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir'd,
the more desirable; or, to say all,
nature herself, tho' pure of sinful thought,
wrought in her so, that seeing me, she turn'd;
I follow'd her; she what was honour knew,
and with obsequious majesty approv'd
my pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower
I led her, blushing, like the morn: all heaven,
and happy constellations on that hour

shed their selectest influence; the earth
gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;
joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
whisper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
disporting, till the amorous bird of night
sung spousal, and bid haste the evening star
on his hill top, to light the bridal lamp.
Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought
my story to the sum of earthly bliss
which I enjoy, and must confess to find
in all things else delight indeed, but such
as us'd, or not, works in the mind no change,
nor vehement desire; these delicacies
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
walks, and the melody of birds; but here
far otherwise, transported I behold,
transported touch; here passion first I felt,
commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
superior and unmov'd, here only weak
against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.
Or nature fail'd in me, and left some part
not proof enough such object to sustain;
or from my side subducting, took perhaps
more than enough; at least on her bestow'd
too much of ornament, in outward show
elaborate, of inward less exact.
For well I understand in the prime end,
of nature her th' inferior, in the mind
and inward faculties, which most excel;
in outward also her resembling less
his image who made both, and less expressing
the character of that dominion given
o'er other creatures; yet when I approach

her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
and in herself complete, so well to know
her own, that what she wills to do or say
seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
all higher knowledge in her presence falls
degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her
loses discount'nanc'd, and like folly shows;
Authority and Reason on her wait,
as one intended first, not after made
occasionally; and, to consummate all,
greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
built in her loveliest, and create an awe
about her, as a guard angelic plac'd.

book 8.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

A DRAMATIC POEM.

Τραγῳδια μιμησις πραξεωι σπουδαιας, &c.—*Aristot. Poet. c.* 9.

Tragœdia est imitatio actionis seriæ, etc. per misericordiam et metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.

THE PERSONS.

Samson.
Manoah, the father of Samson.
Dalila, his Wife.
Harapha of Gath.
Public Officer.
Messenger.
Chorus of Danites.

The Scene before the Prison in Gaza.

THE ARGUMENT.

Samson, made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse; on a festival-day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit awhile and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father Manoah, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom: lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoah then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons; and, lastly, by a public officer, to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play, or shew his strength in their presence: he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him: the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoah returns full of joyful hope, to procure, ere long, his son's deliverance, in the midst of which discourse, an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

Samson. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
to these dark steps, a little further on;
for yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade:
there I am wont to sit, when any chance
relieves me from my task of servile toil,
daily in the common prison else enjoin'd me,
where I a prisoner chain'd, scarce freely draw
the air, imprison'd also, close and damp,
unwholesome draught: but here I feel amends,
the breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
with day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
to Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid
laborious works; unwillingly this rest
their superstition yields me: hence with leave
retiring from the popular noise, I seek
this unfrequented place to find some ease,
ease to the body some, none to the mind
from restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
of hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,
but rush upon me thronging, and present
times past, what once I was, and what am now.
O wherefore was my birth from heaven foretold
twice by an angel, who at last in sight
of both my parents all in flames ascended
from off the altar, where an offering burn'd,
as in a fiery column charioting
his god-like presence, and from some great act
or benefit reveal'd to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd
as of a person separate to God,
design'd for great exploits; if I must die
betray'd, captiv'd, and both my eyes put out,
made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;

to grind in brazen fetters under task
with this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength,
put to the labour of a beast, debas'd
lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver:
ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
divine prediction; what if all foretold
had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,
whom have I to complain of but myself?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
in what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,
under the seal of silence could not keep,
but weakly to a woman must reveal it,
o'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share
of wisdom? vast, unwieldly, burdensome,
proudly secure, yet liable to fall
by weakest subtleties, not made to rule,
but to subserve where wisdom bears command!
God, when he gave me strength, to shew withal
how slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
of highest dispensation, which herein
haply had ends above my reach to know:
suffices that to me strength is my bane,
and proves the source of all my miseries;
so many and so huge, that each apart
would ask a life to wail; but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies: O worse than chains,

dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me' is extinct,
and all her various objects of delight
annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,
inferior to the vilest now become
of man or worm; the vilest here excel me;
they creep, yet see; I dark, in light expos'd
to daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
within doors, or without, still as a fool,
in power of others, never in my own;
scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
without all hope of day!
O first created beam, and thou great word,
let there be light, and light was over all;
why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark
and silent as the moon,
when she deserts the night,
hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
and almost life itself, if it be true
that light is in the soul,
she all in every part; why was the sight
to such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd,
so obvious and so easy to be quench'd?
and not as feeling, through all parts diffus'd,
that she might look at will through every pore?
then had I not been thus exil'd from light,
as in the land of darkness, yet in light,
to live a life half dead, a living death,
and bury'd: but O yet more miserable!
myself my sepulchre, a moving grave,

bury'd, yet not exempt,
by privilege of death and burial,
from worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
but made hereby obnoxious more
to all the miseries of life,
life in captivity
among inhuman foes.
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
the tread of many feet steering this way;
perhaps my enemies, who come to stare
at my affliction, and perhaps to' insult,
their daily practice, to afflict me more.

Chor. This, this is he: softly a while;
let us not break in upon him:
O change beyond report, thought or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,
with languish'd head unpropt,
as one past hope, abandon'd,
and by himself given over;
in slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds,
o'er-worn and soil'd;
or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
that heroic, that renown'd,
irresistible Samson? whom unarm'd
no strength of man or fiercest wild beast could with-
who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid; [stand;
ran on embattled armies clad in iron;
and, weaponless himself,
made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
of brazen shield and spear, the hammer'd cuirass,
chalybean temper'd steel, and frock of mail
adamantean proof?
But safest he who stood aloof,
when insupportably his foot advanc'd,

in scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
spurn'd them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
fled from his lion ramp; old warriors turn'd
their plated backs under his heel,
or grov'ling soil'd their crested helmets in the dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
the jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
a thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of Palestine,
in Ramath-lechi, famous to this day.
Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders
the gates of Azzar, post, and massy bar, [bore,
up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,
no journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so;
like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up heaven.
Which shall I first bewail,
thy bondage or lost sight,
prison within prison
inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
the dungeon of thyself; thy soul
(which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
imprison'd now indeed,
in real darkness of the body dwells,
shut up from outward light,
to' incorporate with gloomy night;
for inward light, alas!
puts forth no visual beam.
O mirror of our fickle state,
since man on earth unparallel'd!
the rarer thy example stands,
by how much from the top of wonderous glory,
strongest of mortal men,
to lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.
For him I reckon not in high estate

whom long descent of birth
or the sphere of fortune raises;
but thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
might have subdu'd the earth,
universally crown'd with highest praises.

Sam. I hear the sound of words, their sense the air
dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

Chor. He speaks: let us draw nigh. Matchless in
the glory late of Israel, now the grief; [might,
we come thy friends and neighbours not unknown,
from Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,
to visit or bewail thee; or, if better,
counsel or consolation we may bring,
salve to thy sores; apt words have power to swage
the tumours of a troubled mind,
and are as balm to fester'd wounds.

Sam. Your coming, friends, revives me; for I learn
now of my own experience, not by talk,
how counterfeit a coin they are who friends
bear in their superscription, (of the most
I would be understood;) in prosp'rous days
they swarm, but in adverse withdraw their heads,
not to be found, tho' sought. Ye see, O friends,
how many evils have inclos'd me round;
yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
blindness; for had I sight, confus'd with shame,
how could I once look up, or heave the head,
who like a foolish pilot have shipwreck'd
my vessel trusted to me from above,
gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a tear,
fool! have divulg'd the secret gift of God
to a deceitful woman? Tell me, friends,
am I not sung and proverb'd for a fool
in every street? do they not say, how well

are come upon him his deserts? yet why?
immeasurable strength they might behold
in me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;
this with the other should, at least, have pair'd;
these two, proportion'd ill, drove me transverse.

Chor. Tax not divine disposal; wisest men
have err'd, and by bad women been deceiv'd;
and shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;
yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
why thou should'st wed Philistian women rather
than of thine own tribe, fairer or as fair,
at least of thy own nation, and as noble.

Sam. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleas'd
me, not my parents, that I sought to wed
the daughter of an infidel: they knew not
that what I motion'd was of God; I knew
from intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd
the marriage on; that by occasion hence
I might begin Israel's deliverance,
the work to which I was divinely call'd.
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had! fond wish too late,)
was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
that specious monster, my accomplish'd snare.
I thought it lawful from my former act,
and the same end: still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors: of what now I suffer
she was not the prime cause, but I myself,
who, vanquish'd with a peal of words, (O weakness!)
gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke
the Philistine, thy country's enemy,

thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

Sam. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
on Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,
who seeing those great acts, which God had done
singly by me against their conquerors,
acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd
deliverance offer'd: I on the other side
us'd no ambition to commend my deeds:
the deeds themselves, tho' mute, spoke loud the doer
but they persisted deaf, and would not seem
to count them things worth notice, till at length
their lords the Philistines with gather'd powers
enter'd Judea, seeking me, who then
safe to the rock of Etham was retir'd;
not flying, but fore casting in what place
to set upon them, what advantag'd best:
mean while the men of Judah, to prevent
the harrass of their land, beset me round:
I willingly on some conditions came
into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
to th' uncircumcis'd a welcome prey,
bound with two cords: but cords to me were threads
touch'd with the flame: on their whole host I flew
unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd
their choicest youth; they only liv'd who fled.
Had Judah that day join'd, or one whole tribe,
they had by this possess'd the towers of Gath,
and lorded over them whom they now serve:
but what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
and by their vices brought to servitude,
than to love bondage more than liberty;
bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;
and to despise, or envy, or suspect

whom God hath of his special favour rais'd
as their deliverer? if he ought begin,
how frequent to desert him, and at last
to heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
how Succoth and the fort of Penuel
their great deliverer contemn'd,
the mathless Gideon, in pursuit
of Madian and her vanquish'd kings:
and how ingrateful Ephraim
had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
not worse than by his shield and spear,
defended Israel from the Ammonite,
had not his prowess quell'd their pride
in that sore battle, when so many dy'd
without reprieve, adjudg'd to death,
for want of well-pronouncing Shibboleth.

Sam. Of such examples add me to the roll;
me easily indeed mine may neglect,
but God's propos'd deliverance not so.

Chor. Just are the ways of God,
and justifiable to men;
unless there be who think not God at all:
if any be, they walk obscure;
for of such doctrine never was there school,
but the heart of the fool,
and no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
as to his own edicts found contradicting,
then give the reins to wand'ring thought,
regardless of his glory's diminution;
till by their own perplexities involv'd,
they ravel more, still less resolv'd,

but never find self-satisfying solution.
As if they would confine th' Interminable,
and tie him to his own prescript,
who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
and hath full right 't exempt
whom so it pleases him by choice
from national obstruction, without taint
of sin, or legal debt;
for with his own laws he can best dispense.
He would not else, who never wanted means,
nor in respect of th' enemy just cause
to set his people free,
have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
against his vow of strictest purity,
to seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
unclean, unchaste.
Down, reason, then, at least vain reasoning down
tho' reason here aver,
that moral verdict quits her of unclean:
unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.
But see, here comes thy reverend sire,
with careful step, locks as white as down,
old Manoah: advise
forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.
Sam. Ay me! another inward grief, awak'd
with mention of that name, renews th' assault.
Manoah. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
tho' in this uncouth place; if old respect,
as I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
my son, now captive, hither hath inform'd
your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
came lagging after; say if he be here?
Chor. As signal now in low dejected state,
as erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
that invincible Samson, far renown'd,
the dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
equivalent to angels walk'd their streets,
none offering fight; who single combatant
duel'd their armies rank'd in proud array,
himself an army, now unequal match
to save himself against a coward arm'd
at one spear's length. O ever-failing trust
in mortal strength! and oh what not in man
deceivable and vain? Nay, what thing good
pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I pray'd for children, and thought barrenness
in wedlock a reproach; I gain'd a son,
and such a son as all men hail'd me happy;
who would be now a father in my stead?
O wherefore did God grant me my request,
and as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
our earnest prayers, then, given with solemn hand
as graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?
For this did th' angel twice descend? for this
ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a plant
select, and sacred, glorious for a while,
the miracle of men; then in an hour
insnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,
into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
Alas! methinks whom God hath chosen once
to worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
he should not so overwhelm, and as a thrall,
subject him to so foul indignities,
be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

Sam. Appoint not heavenly disposition, father;

nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
but justly; I myself have brought them on,
sole author I, sole cause: if aught seems vile,
as vile hath been my folly, who' have profan'd
the mystery of God, given me under pledge
of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,
a Canaanite, my faithless enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,
but warn'd by oft experience: did not she
of Timna first betray me, and reveal
the secret wrested from me in her heighth
of nuptial love profess'd, carrying it strait
to them who had corrupted her, my spies
and rivals? In this other was there found
more faith, who also, in her prime of love,
spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
tho' offer'd only by the scent, conceiv'd
her spurious first-born, treason against me?
Thrice she assay'd, with flattering prayers and sighs,
and amorous reproaches, to win from me
my capital secret, in what part my strength
lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might know;
thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport
her importunity, each time perceiving
how openly, and with what impudence,
she purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse
than undissembled hate) with what contempt
she sought to make me traitor to myself;
yet the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
with blandish'd parlies, feminine assaults,
tongue batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night
to storm me, overwatch'd and wearied out,
at times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,

who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd
might easily have shook off all her snares;
but foul effeminacy held me yok'd
her bond-slave: O indignity, O blot
to honour and religion! servile mind,
rewarded well with servile punishment!
the base degree to which I now am fallen.
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
as was my former servitude, ignoble,
unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
true slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
that saw not how degenerately I serv'd.

Man. I cannot praise thy marriage choices, son;
rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead
divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that; this I am sure, our foes
found soon occasion thereby to make thee
their captive and their triumph; thou the sooner
temptation found'st, or over-potent charms
to violate the sacred trust of silence
deposited within thee; which to have kept
tacit was in thy power: true; and thou bear'st
enough, and more, the burden of that fault;
bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,
that rigid score. A worse thing yet remains;
this day the Philistines a popular feast
here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim
great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud
to Dagon, as their god who hath deliver'd
thee, Samson, bound and blind, into their hands;
them out of thine, who slews't them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnify'd, and God,
besides whom is no god, compar'd with idols,

disglorify'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
by the idolatrous rout amidst their wine:
which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
of all reproach the most with shame that ever
could have befall'n thee and thy father's house.

Sam. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
that I this honour, I this pomp, have brought
to Dagon, and advanc'd his praises high
among the heathen round; to God have brought
dishonour, obloquy, and op'd the mouths
of idolists and atheists; have brought scandal
to Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
in feeble hearts, propense enough before
to waver, or fall off and join with idols;
which is my chief affliction, shame, and sorrow,
the anguish of my soul, that suffers not
mine eyes to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
with me hath end; all the contest is now
'twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presum'd,
me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
his deity comparing and preferring
before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd, but
will arise, and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
of all these boasted trophies won on me,
and with confusion blank his worshippers.

Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and
I as a prophecy receive; for God, [these words
nothing more certain, will not long defer
to vindicate the glory of his name

against all competition, nor will long
endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
thou must not in the meanwhile here forgot,
lie in this miserable loathsome plight
neglected. I already have made way
to some Philistine lords, with whom to treat
about thy ransom: well they may by this
have satisfy'd their utmost of revenge
by pains and slaveries, worse than death' inflicted
on thee, who now no more can'st do them harm.

Sam. Spare that proposal, father; spare the trouble
of that solicitation; let me here,
as I deserve, pay on my punishment;
and expiate, if possible, my crime,
shameful garrulity. To have reveal'd
secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
how heinous had the fact been, how deserving
contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded
all friendship, and avoided as a blab,
the mark of fool set on his front?
But I God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
presumptiously have publish'd impiously,
weakly at least, and shamefully; a sin
that gentiles in their parables condemn
to their abyss and horrid pains confin'd.

Man. Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite;
but act not in thine own affliction, son:
repent the sin; but if the punishment
thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;
or the execution leave to high disposal,
and let another hand, not thine, exact
thy penal forfeit from thyself: perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;

who ever more approves, and more accepts;
(best pleas'd with humble and filial submission;)
him who imploring mercy sues for life,
than who self-rigorous chooses death as due;
which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd
for self-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offer'd means; who knows
but God hath set before us, to return thee
home to thy country and his sacred house,
where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert
his further ire, with prayers and vows renew'd?

Sam. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
to what end should I seek it? when in strength
all mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes
with youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
of birth from Heav'n foretold and high exploits,
full of divine instinct, after some proof
of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
the sons of Anak, famous now and blaz'd,
fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walk'd about admir'd of all, and dreaded
on hostile ground, none daring my affront.
Then swoln with pride, into the snare I fell
of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
soften'd with pleasure and voluptuous life;
at length to lay my head and hallow'd pledge
of all my strength in the lascivious lap
of a deceitful concubine, who shore me
like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,
shav'n, and disarm'd among mine enemies.

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
which many a famous warrior overturns,
thou could'st repress; nor did the dancing ruby

sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour, or the smell,
or taste, that cheers the hearts of gods and men,
allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

Sam. Wherever fountain or fresh current flow'd
against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
with touch etherial of Heaven's fiery rod
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
thirst, and refresh'd; nor envy'd them the grape
whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Chor. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
and strongest drinks our chief support of health,
when God with these forbidden made choice to rear
his mighty champion, strong above compare,
whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

Sam. But what avail'd this temperance not complete
against another object more enticing?
What boots it at one gate to make defence,
and at another to let in the foe,
effeminately vanquish'd? by which means,
now blind, dishearten'd? sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,
to what can I be useful, wherein serve
my nation, and the work from Heav'n impos'd,
but to sit idle on the household hearth,
a burd'nous drone; to visitants a gaze,
or pity'd object, these redundant locks
robustious to no purpose clustering down,
vain monuments of strength; till length of years
and sedentary numbness craze my limbs
to a contemptible old age obscure?
Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
till vermin or the draff of servile food
consume me, and oft-invocated death
hasten the welcome end of all my pains. [that gift

Man. Wilt thou then serve th' Philistines with

which was expressly given thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
inglorious, unemploy'd, with age outworn.
But God, who caus'd a fountain at thy prayer
from the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to' allay
after the brunt of battle, can as easy
cause light again within thine eyes to spring,
wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
and I persuade me so: why else this strength
miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
his might continues in thee not for nought,
nor shall his wonderous gifts be frustrate thus.

Sam. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
that these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
nor th' other light of life continue long,
but yield to double darkness, nigh at hand:
so much I feel my genial spirits droop,
my hopes all flat, nature within me seems
in all her functions weary of herself;
my race of glory run, and race of shame,
and I shall shortly be with them that rest.

Man. Believe not these suggestions which proceed
from anguish of the mind and humours black,
that mingle with thy fancy. I however
must not omit a father's timely care
to prosecute the means of thy deliverance
by ransome, or how else: meanwhile be calm
and healing words from these thy friends admit.

Sam. O that torment should not be confin'd
to the body's wounds and sores,
with maladies innumerable
in heart, head, breast, and reins;
but must secret passage find
to th' inmost mind,

there exercise all his fierce accidents,
and on her purest spirits prey,
as on entrails, joints, and limbs,
with answerable pains, but more intense,
tho' void of corporal sense.
My griefs not only pain me
as a lingering disease,
but finding no redress, ferment and rage,
nor less than wounds immedicable
rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
to black mortification.
Thoughts, my tormentors, arm'd with deadly stings,
mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
or medicinal liquor can assuage,
nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o'er
to death's benumbing opium, as my only cure:
thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
and sense of Heaven's desertion.
I was his nursling once and choice delight,
his destin'd from the womb,
promis'd by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
abstemious I grew up, and thriv'd amain;
he led me on to mightiest deeds;
above the nerve of mortal arm,
against th' uncircumcis'd, our enemies:
but now hath cast me off as never known,
and to those cruel enemies;
whom I by his appointment had provok'd;
left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss
of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated

the subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
hopeless are all my evils, all remediless:
this one pray'r yet remains, might I be heard,
no long petition, speedy death,
the close of all my miseries, and the balm.

Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise,
in ancient and in modern books inroll'd,
extoling patience as the truest fortitude;
and to the bearing well of all calamities,
all chances incident to man's frail life,
consolitaries writ
with study'd argument, and much persuasion sought
lenient of grief and anxious thought:
but with th' afflicted in his pangs their sound
little prevails, or rather seems a tune
harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint;
unless he feel within
some source of consolation from above,
secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
and fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers, what is man!
that thou towards him with hand so various,
or might I say contrarious,
temper'st thy providence through his short course,
not evenly, as thou rul'st
th' angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,
irrational and brute.
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
that wand'ring loose about
grow up and perish as the summer-fly,
heads without name no more remember'd,
but such as thou hast solemnly elected,
with gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,

to some great work, thy glory,
and people's safety, which in part they' effect:
yet towards these thus dignify'd, thou oft
amidst their height of noon
changest thy count'nance, and thy hand, with no re-
of highest favours past [gard
from thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them or remit
to life obscur'd, which were a fair dismission,
but throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them
unseemly falls in human eye, [high,
too grievous for the trespass or omission;
oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
of heathen and profane, their carcases
to dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd;
or to th' unjust tribunals, under change of times,
and condemnation of th' ungrateful multitude.
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty
with sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
painful diseases and deform'd,
in crude old age;
tho' not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
the punishment of dissolute days: in fine,
just or unjust alike seem miserable,
for oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
the image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
his labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this, what thing of sea or land?
female of sex it seems
that so bedeck'd, ornate and gay,
comes this way sailing

like a stately ship
of Tarsus, bound for th' isles
of Javan or Gadire,
with all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
sails fill'd, and streamers waving,
courted by all the winds that hold them play,
an amber scent of odorous perfume
her harbinger, a damsel train behind;
some rich Philistian matron she may seem;
and now at nearer view, no other certain
than Dalila thy wife. [me.

Sam. My wife! my traitress! let her not come near

Chor. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee fix'd,
about t' have spoke, but now, with head declin'd,
like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew, she weeps,
and words address'd seem into tears dissolv'd,
wetting the borders of her silken veil:
but now again she makes address to speak.

Dalila. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,
which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears
may expiate, (tho' the fact more evil drew
in the perverse event than I foresaw)
my penance hath not slacken'd, tho' my pardon
no way assur'd. But conjugal affection
prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
hath led me on desirous to behold
once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
if ought in my ability my serve
to lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
thy mind with what amends is in my power,
tho' late, yet in some part to recompense

my rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

Sam. Out, out, hyæna! these are thy wonted arts,
and arts of every woman false like thee,
to break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
then as repentant to submit, beseech,
and reconcilement move with feign'd remorse,
confess, and promise wonders in her change,
not truly penitent, but chief to try
her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,
his virtue' or weakness which way to assail:
then with more cautious and instructed skill
again transgresses, and again submits;
that wisest and best men, full oft beguil'd
with goodness principled not to reject
the penitent, but ever to forgive,
are drawn to wear out miserable days,
intangl'd with a pois'nous bosom snake,
if not by quick destruction soon cut off,
as I by thee, to ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour
to lessen or extenuate my offence,
but that on the' other side, if it be weigh'd
by itself, with aggravations not surcharg'd,
or else with just allowance counterpois'd,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
the easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
in me, but incident to all our sex,
curiosity, inquisitive, importune
of secrets, then with like infirmity
to publish them, both common female faults.
Was it not weakness also to make known
for importunity, that is for nought,
wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?

to what I did thou showed'st me first the way.
But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not;
nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,
so near related, or the same of kind,
thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
the gentler, if severely thou exact not
more strength from me than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
the jealousy of love, powerful of sway
in human hearts, nor less in mind towards thee,
caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable
of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou wouldst leave me
as her at Timna, sought by all means therefore
how to indear, and hold thee to me firmest:
no better way I saw than by importuning
to learn thy secrets, get into my power
thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,
why then reveal'd? I was assur'd by those
who tempted me, that nothing was design'd
against thee but safe custody and hold:
that made for me: I knew that liberty
would draw thee forth to perilous enterprizes,
while I at home sat full of cares and fears,
wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed.
Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
mine and Love's prisoner, not the Philistines,
whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in Love's law have pass'd for good,
tho' fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
and love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe
yet always pity' or pardon hath obtain'd.

Be not unlike all others, not austere
as thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
in uncompassionate anger do not so.

Sam. How cunningly the sorceress displays
her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
by this appears: I gave, thou say'st, th' example,
I led the way; bitter reproach, but true;
I to myself was false ere thou to me;
such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
take to thy wicked deed; which, when thou seest
impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
confess it feign'd: weakness is thy excuse,
and I believe it, weakness to resist
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
what murderer, what traitor, parricide,
incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
with God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage
to satisfy thy lust: love seeks to' have love:
my love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way
to raise in me inexpiable hate,
knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd?
in vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
or by evasions thy crime uncoverest more.

Dal. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea
in man or woman, tho' to thy own condemning,
hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
what sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of men,
the constantest to' have yielded without blame.

It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
that wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates
and princes of my country came in person,
solicited, commanded, threaten'd, urg'd,
adjur'd by all the bonds of civil duty
and of religion, press'd how just it was,
how honourable, how glorious to entrap
a common enemy, who had destroy'd
such numbers of our nation: and the priest
was not behind, but ever at my ear
preaching how meritorious with the gods
it would be to ensnare an irreligious
dishonourer of Dagon. What had I
to oppose against such powerful arguments?
only my love of thee held long debate,
and combated in silence all these reasons
with hard contests: at length that grounded maxim
so rife and celebrated in the mouths
of wisest men, that to the public good
private respects must yield, with grave authority
took full possession of me and prevail'd;
virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so injoining.

Sam. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end;
in feign'd religion, smooth hypocrisy!
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my tribe
and of my nation chose thee from among
my enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,
too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to thee;
not out of levity, but over-power'd
by thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then

didst thou at first receive me for thy husband,
then, as since then, thy country's foe profess'd?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
parents and country; nor was I their subject,
nor under their protection, but my own;
thou mine, not their's: if aught against my life
thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
against the law of nature, law of nations,
no more thy country, but an impious crew
of men conspiring to uphold their state
by worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
for which our country is a name so dear;
not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee;
to please thy gods thou didst it: gods, unable
to acquit themselves, and prosecute their foes
but by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
of their own deity, gods cannot be;
less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd.
These false pretexts and varnish'd colours failing,
bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear?

Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

Sam. For want of words, no doubt, or lack of breath;
witness when I was worried with thy peals.

Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
in what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson;
afford me place to shew what recompense
towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
misguided; only what remains past cure
bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
to' afflict thyself in vain: tho' sight be lost,
life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd
where other senses want not their delights

at home in leisure and domestic ease,
exempt from many a care and chance to which
eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
from forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
with me, where my redoubled love and care
with nursing diligence, to me glad office,
may ever tend about thee to old age,
with all things grateful cheer'd, and so supply'd,
that what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

Sam. No, no; of my condition take no care;
it fits not; thou and I long since are twain:
nor think me so unwary or accurs'd,
to bring my feet again into the snare
where once I have been caught: I know thy trains,
tho' dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;
thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms,
no more on me have power, their force is null'd,
so much of adder's wisdom I have learn'd
to fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone couldst hate me
thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me;
how wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
deceivable, in most things as a child
helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,
and last neglected? How wouldst thou insult,
when I must live uxorious to thy will
in perfect thraldom, how again betray me,
bearing my words and doings to the lords
to gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile?
This jail I count the house of liberty
to thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

Dal. Let me approach, at least, and touch thy hand.

Sam. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
my sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee; go with that;
bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
it hath brought forth to make thee memorable
among illustrious women, faithful wives!
cherish thy hasten'd widowhood with the gold
of matrimonial treason! so farewell.

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
to prayers than winds and seas; yet winds to seas
are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore:
thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
eternal tempest, never to be calm'd.
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing
for peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?
bid go with evil omen, and the brand
of infamy upon my name denounc'd?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame, if not double-fac'd is double-mouth'd,
and with contrary blast proclaims most deeds;
on both his wings, one black, the other white,
bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcis'd
in Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
to all posterity may stand defam'd,
with malediction mention'd, and the blot
of falsehood most unconjugal traduc'd.
But in my country, where I most desire,
in Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be nam'd among the famousest
of women, sung at solemn festivals,
living and dead recorded, who, to save

her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
above the faith of wedlock-bands: my tomb
with odours visited and annual flowers;
not less renown'd than in Mount Ephraim
Jael, who with inhospitable guile
smote Sisera, sleeping, through the temples nail'd.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
the public marks of honour and reward
conferr'd upon me for the piety
which to my country I was judg'd to' have shewn.
At this whoever envies or repines,
I leave him to his lot, and like my own. [*Exit.*

Chor. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

Sam. So let her go; God sent her to debase me,
and aggravate my folly, who committed
to such a viper his most sacred trust
of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

Chor. Yet beauty, tho' injurious, hath strange
after offence returning, to regain [power,
love once possess'd, nor can be easily
repuls'd, without much inward passion felt,
and secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sam. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
that woman's love can win or long inherit;
but what it is, hard is to say,
harder to hit,
(which way soever men refer it)
much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day,
or seven, tho' one should musing sit.
If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride

had not so soon preferr'd
thy paranymph, worthless to thee compar'd,
successor in thy bed,
nor both so loosely disallied
their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
was lavish'd on their sex, that inward gifts
were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,
capacity not rais'd to apprehend
or value what is best
in choice, but oftest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mix'd,
of constancy no root infix'd,
that either they love nothing, or not long?

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
soft, modest, meek, demure,
once join'd, the contrary she proves, a thorn
intestine, far within defensive arms
a cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
draws him awry enslav'd
with dotage, and his sense deprav'd
to folly' and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
embark'd with such a steers-mate at the helm?

Favour'd of Heaven, who finds
one virtuous, rarely found,
that in domestic good combines:
happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
but virtue, which breaks through all opposition,
and all temptation can remove,
most shines, and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law
gave to the man despotic power
over his female in due awe,
nor from that right to part an hour,
smile she or lour:
so shall he least confusion draw
on his whole life, not sway'd
by female usurpation, or dismay'd.

But had we best retire? I see a storm.

Sam. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.

Sam. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
the bait of honied words; a rougher tongue
draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,
the giant Harapha of Gath, his look
haughty as is his pile, high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? What wind hath blown him [hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw
the sumptuous Dalila floating this way:
his habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

Sam. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

Chor. His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

Harapha. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,
as these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
tho' for no friendly' intent. I am of Gath;
men call me Harapha, of stock renown'd
as Og or Anak, and the Emims old,
that Kiriathaim held; thou know'st me now,
if thou at all art known. Much I have heard
of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd,
incredible to me, in this displeas'd,
that I was never present on the place
of those encounters, where we might have try'd

each other's force in camp or listed field;
and now am come to see of whom such noise
hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,
if thy appearance answer loud report.

Sam. The way to know were not to see, but taste.

Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought
gyves and the mill had tam'd thee. O that fortune
had brought me to the field where thou art fam'd
to' have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw;
I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,
or left thy carcase where the ass lay thrown:
so had the glory' of prowess been recover'd
to Palestine, won by a Philistine,
from the unforeskinn'd race, of whom thou bear'st
the highest name for valiant acts; that honour,
certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out. [but do

Sam. Boast not of what thou would'st have done,
what then thou would'st, thou seest it in thy hand.

Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
and thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

Sam. Such usage as your honourable lords
afford me, assassinated and betray'd,
who durst not with their whole united powers
in fight withstand me single and unarm'd,
nor in the house with chamber ambushes
close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,
till they had hir'd a woman with their gold
breaking her marriage-faith to circumvent me.
Therefore without feign'd shifts let be assign'd
some narrow place inclos'd, where sight may give thee,
or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
and brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,

vaunt-brass and greves, and gauntlet, add thy spear,
a weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield;
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
and raise such outcries on thy clatter'd iron,
which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
that in a little time, while breath remains thee,
thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast
again in safety what thou wouldst have done
to Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious
which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
their ornament and safety, had not spells
and black enchantments, some magician's art, [Heaven
arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from
feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,
where strength can least abide, tho' all thy hairs
were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back
of chaf'd wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.

Sam. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts:
my trust is in the living God, who gave me
at my nativity this strength, diffus'd
no less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,
than thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,
the pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof if Dagon be thy god,
go to his temple, invocate his aid
with solemnest devotion, spread before him
how highly it concerns his glory now
to frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
which I to be the power of Israel's God
avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
offering to combat thee his champion bold,
with th' utmost of his godhead seconded:
then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow,

soon feel, whose god is strongest, thine or mine.

Har. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be;
thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
quite from his people, and deliver'd up
into thy enemies' hand, permitted them
to put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee
into the common prison, there to grind
among the slaves and asses thy comrades,
as good for nothing else; no better service
with those thy boist'rous locks, no worthy match
for valour to assail, nor by the sword
of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,
but by the barber's razor best subdu'd.

Sam. All these indignities, for such they are
from thine, these evils I deserve, and more,
acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,
whose ear is ever open, and his eye
gracious to re-admit the suppliant:
in confidence whereof I once again
defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
by combat to decide whose god is God,
thine or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
he will accept thee to defend his cause,
a murderer, a revolter, and a robber. [me these?

Sam. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove

Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
their magistrates confess'd it, when they took thee
as a league-breaker, and deliver'd bound
into our hands: for hadst thou not committed
notorious murder on those thirty men
at Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
then like a robber stripp'st them of their robes?

The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
went up with armed powers thee only seeking,
to others did no violence, nor spoil.

Sam. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argu'd me no foe;
and in your city held my nuptial feast:
but your ill-meaning politician lords,
under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
appointed to await me thirty spies,
who, threatening cruel death, constrain'd the bride
to wring from me and tell to them my secret,
that solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd.
When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,
as on my enemies, wherever chanc'd,
I us'd hostility, and took their spoil
to pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords,
it was the force of conquest; force with force
is well ejected when the conquer'd can.
But I, a private person, whom my country
as a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd
single rebellion, and did hostile acts.
I was no private, but a person rais'd
with strength sufficient and command from Heaven
to free my country; if their servile minds
me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
but to their masters gave me up for nought,
th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heaven assign'd,
and had perform'd it, if my known offence
had not disabled me, not all your force:
these shifts refuted, answer thy appellant,
tho' by his blindness maim'd for high attempts,
who now defies thee thrice to single fight,

as a petty enterprize of small enforce.

Har. With thee! a man condemn'd, a slave enroll'd,
due by the law to capital punishment!
to fight with thee no man of arms will deign. [me,

Sam. Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey
to descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer; part not hence so slight inform'd;
but take good heed my hand survey not thee.

Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unus'd
hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Sam. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy fear I incurable; bring up thy van, [hand
my heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

Sam. Go, baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,
tho' in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
and with one buffet lay thy structure low,
or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down
to th' hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

Har. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
these braveries in irons loaden on thee. [*Exit.*

Chor. His giantship is gone somewhat crest-fall'n,
stalking with less unconscionable strides,
and lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

Sam. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,
tho' fame divulge him father of five sons,
all of gigantic size, Goliath chief.

Chor. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
and with malicious counsel stir them up
some way' or other yet further to afflict thee.

Sam. He must allege some cause, and offer'd fight
will not dare mention, lest a question rise
whether he dust accept th' offer or not;
and, that he durst not, plain enough appear'd.

Much more affliction than already felt
they cannot well impose, nor I sustain,
if they intend advantage of my labours,
the work of many hands, which earns my keeping
with no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
my speediest friend, by death to rid me hence;
the worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

Chor. O how comely it is, and how reviving
to the spirits of just men long oppress'd!
when God into the hands of their deliverer
puts invincible might
to quell the mighty of the earth, th' oppressor,
the brute and boist'rous force of violent men
hardy and industrious to support
tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
the righteous and all such as honour truth
he all their ammunition
and feats of war defeats
with plain heroic magnitude of mind
and celestial vigour arm'd,
their armories and magazines contemns
renders them useless, while
with winged expedition,
swift as the lightning glances, he executes
his errand on the wicked, who surpris'd
lose their defence distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise
of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
making them each his own deliverer,
and victor over all

that Tyranny or Fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might indu'd
above the sons of men; but sight bereav'd
may chance to number thee with those
whom patience finally must crown.
This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
labouring thy mind
more than the working day thy hands.
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,
for I descry this way
some other tending; in his hand
a sceptre or quaint staff he bears,
comes on amain, speed in his look.
By his habit I discern him now
a public officer, and now at hand;
his message will be short and voluble.

Officer. Hebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

Chor. His manacles remark him, there he sits.

Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say;
this day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
with sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games:
thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
and now some public proof thereof require
to honour this great feast, and great assembly:
rise therefore with all speed, and come along,
where I will see thee hearten'd, and fresh clad,
to' appear as fits before the illustrious lords. [them

Sam. Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell
our law forbids at their religious rites
my presence; for that cause I cannot come.

Off. This answer, be assur'd, will not content them.

Sam. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,

juglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,
but they must pick me out, with shackles tir'd,
and over-labour'd at their public mill,
to make them sport with blind activity?
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
on my refusal to distress me more,
or make a game of my calamities?
return the way thou cam'st; I will not come.

Off. Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.

Sam. Myself? my conscience and internal peace.
Can they think me so broken, so debas'd
with corporal servitude, that my mind ever
will condescend to such absurd commands;
altho' their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
and in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
to shew them feats, and play before their god,
the worst of all indignities, yet on me
join'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

Off. My message was impos'd on me with speed,
brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

Sam. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

Sam. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

Chor. Consider, Samson, matters now are strain'd
up to the height, whether to hold or break:
he's gone, and who knows how he may report
thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
expect another message more imperious,
more lordly thund'ring than thou well wilt bear.

Sam. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
of strength, again returning with my hair
after my great transgression, so requite
favour renew'd, and add a greater sin

by prostituting holy things to idols?
a Nazarite in place abominable
vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon?
Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
what act more execrably unclean, profane?

Chor. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean. [Philistines,

Sam. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
honest and lawful, to deserve my food
of those who have me in their civil power. [file not.

Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward acts de-

Sam. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds;
but who constrains me to the temple' of Dagon,
not dragging? The Philistine lords command:
commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, venturing to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
set God behind: which in his jealousy
shall never unrepented find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me, or thee,
present in temples, at idolatrous rites,
for some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

Chor. How thou wilt come off here surmounts my reach.

Sam. Be of good courage; I begin to feel
some rousing motions in me, which dispose
to something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along;
nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be ought of presage in the mind,
this day will be remarkable in my life
by some great act, or of my days the last.

Chor. In time thou hast resolv'd; the man returns.

Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
to thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
and dar'st thou at our sending and command
dispute thy coming? come without delay;
or we shall find such engines to assail
and hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
tho' thou wert firmlier fasten'd than a rock.

Sam. I could be well content to try their art,
which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
Yet knowing their advantages too many,
because they shall not trail me through their streets
like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
to such as owe them absolute subjection;
and for a life who will not change his purpose?
(so mutable are all the ways of men;)
yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
scandalous or forbidden in our law.

Off. I praise thy resolution: doff these links:
by this compliance thou wilt win the lords
to favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

Sam. Brethren, farewell; your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
to see me girt with friends; and how the sight
of me, as of a common enemy,
so dreaded once, may now exasperate them,
I know not: lords are lordliest in their wine;
and the well-feasted priest then soonest fir'd
with zeal, if ought religion seem concern'd;
no less the people on their holy-days
impetuous, insolent, unquenchable:
happen what may, of me expect to hear

nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
our God, our law, my nation, or myself,
the last of me or no I cannot warrant.

Chor. Go, and the Holy One
of Israel be thy guide
to what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
great among the heathen round;
send thee the angel of thy birth, to stand
fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
rode up in flames, after his message told
of thy conception, and be now a shield
of fire; that Spirit that first rush'd on thee
in the camp of Dan,
be efficacious in thee now at need.
For never was from Heaven imparted
measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
as in thy wonderous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoah in such haste
with youthful steps? much livelier than ere while
he seems; supposing here to find his son,
or of him bringing to us some glad news. [hither

Manoah. Peace with you, brethren; my inducement
was not at present here to find my son,
by order of the lords now parted hence
to come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came, the city rings,
and numbers thither flock. I had no will,
lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly.
But that which mov'd my coming now was chiefly
to give ye part with me what hope I have
with good success to work his liberty.

Chor. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
with thee: say, reverend sire, we thirst to hear.

Man. I have attempted one by one the lords,

either at home, or through the high street passing,
with supplication prone and father's tears,
to accept of ransom for my son, their prisoner.
Some much averse I found and wonderous harsh,
contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
that part most reverenc'd Dagon and his priests:
others more moderate seeming, but their aim
private reward, for which both God and state
they easily would set to sale: a third
more generous far and civil, who confess'd
they had enough reveng'd; having reduc'd
their foe to misery beneath their fears,
the rest was magnanimity to remit,
if some convenient ransom were propos'd.
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.

Chor. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
or at some proof of strength before them shown.

Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
may compass it, shall willingly be paid
and number'd down: much rather I shall choose
to live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
and he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fix'd not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
if need be, I am ready to forego
and quit: not wanting him I shall want nothing.

Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
thou for thy son art bent to lay out all:
sons wont to nurse their parents in old age;
thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
and view him sitting in the house, ennobled

with all those high exploits by him atchiev'd,
and on his shoulders waving down those locks
that of a nation arm'd the strength contain'd:
and I persuade me God had not permitted
his strength again to grow up with his hair,
garrison'd round about him like a camp
of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
to use him further yet in some great service,
not to sit idle with so great a gift
useless, and thence ridiculous about him.
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

Chor. Thy hopes are not ill-founded, nor seem vain
of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
conceiv'd, agreeable to a father's love,
in both which we, as next, participate. [noise!

Man. I know your friendly minds and—O what
mercy of Heaven, what hideous noise was that!
horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

Chor. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
as if the whole inhabitation perish'd!
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise;
ruin, destruction, at the utmost point.

Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise;
oh! it continues, they have slain my son.

Chor. Thy son is rather slaying them; that outcry
from slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
what shall we do, stay here or run and see?

Chor. Best keep together here, lest running thither,
we unawares run into danger's mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fallen;
from whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here;

from other hands we need not much to fear.
What if his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,
he now be dealing dole among his foes,
and over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way?

Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
for his people of old; what hinders now?

Man. He can I know, but doubt to think he will;
yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
for evil news rides post, while good news baits;
and to our wish I see one hither speeding,
an Hebrew as I guess, and of our tribe.

Messenger. O whither shall I run, or which way fly
the sight of this so horrid spectacle,
which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold?
for dire imagination still pursues me;
but Providence or instinct of nature seems,
or reason, tho' disturb'd, and scarce consulted,
to have guided me aright, I know not how,
to thee first, reverend Manaoh, and to these
my countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
as at some distance from the place of horror,
so in the sad event too much concern'd.

Man. The accident was loud, and here before thee
with rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not;
no preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

Mes. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
and sense distract, to know well what I utter.

Man. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

Mes. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen;
all in a moment overwhelm'd and fallen.

Man. Sad; but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
the desolation of a hostile city.

Mes. Feed on that first; there may in grief be surfeit.

Man. Relate by whom.

Mes. By Samson.

Man. That still lessens
the sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

Mes. Ah, Manoah, I refrain too suddenly
to utter what will come at last too soon;
lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.

Man. Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

Mes. Take then the worst in brief; Samson is dead.

Man. The worst indeed, O all my hopes defeated
to free him hence! but Death, who sets all free,
hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd
hopeful of his delivery which now proves
abortive as the first-born bloom of Spring
nipt with the lagging rear of Winter's frost!
yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first
how dy'd he? death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell, thou say'st, by whom fell he?
what glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

Mes. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

Man. Wearied with slaughter then, or how? explain.

Mes. By his own hands.

Man. Self-violence? what cause
brought him so soon at variance with himself
among his foes?

Mes. Inevitable cause
at once both to destroy and be destroy'd;
the edifice, where all were met to see him,
upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

Man. O lastly over-strong against thyself!
a dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know; but while things yet
are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,
eye-witness of what first or last was done,
relation more particular and distinct.

Mes. Occasions drew me early to this city,
and as the gates I enter'd with sun-rise,
the morning trumpets festival proclaim'd
through each high street: little I had dispatch'd,
when all abroad was rumour'd that this day
Samson should be brought forth to shew the people
proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;
I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded
not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre
half-round, on two main pillars vaulted high,
with seats where all the lords and each degree
of sort might sit in order to behold;
the other side was open, where the throng
on banks and scaffolds under sky might stand;
I among these aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
when to their sports they turn'd. Immediately
was Samson as a public servant brought,
in their state livery clad; before him pipes
and timbrels; on each side went armed guards,
both horse and foot: before him and behind
archers and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
who' had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient, but undaunted, where they led him,

came to the place; and what was set before him,
which without help of eye might be assay'd
to heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd
all with incredible, stupendous force,
none daring to appear antagonist.
At length for intermission sake they led him
between the pillars; he his guide requested
(for so from such as nearer stood we heard)
as over-tir'd to let him lean a while
with both his arms on those two massy pillars
that to the arched roof gave main support.
He unsuspicious led him; which when Samson
felt in his arms, with head a while inclin'd,
and eyes fast fix'd he stood, as one who pray'd,
or some great matter in his mind revolv'd:
at last with head erect thus cry'd aloud:
"Hitherto, lords, what your commands impos'd
I have perform'd, as reason was obeying,
not without wonder or delight beheld:
now of my own accord such other trial
I mean to shew you of my strength, yet greater,
as with amaze shall strike all who behold."
This utter'd, straining all his nerves, he bow'd,
as with the force of winds and waters pent
when mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
with horrible convulsions to and fro
he tugg'd, he shook, till down they came, and drew
the whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
their choice nobility and flower, not only
of this but each Philistain city round,
met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson, with these immix'd, inevitably

pull'd down the same destruction on himself:
the vulgar only scap'd who stood without.

Chor. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
living or dying thou hast fulfill'd
the work for which thou wast foretold
to Israel, and now lyest victorious
among thy slain, self-kill'd;
not willingly, but tangled in the fold
of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd
thee with thy slaughter'd foes, in number more
than all thy life hath slain before.

1 *Semichor.* While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
and fat regorg'd of bulls and goats,
chaunting their idol, and preferring
before our living dread who dwells
in Silo, his bright sanctuary:
among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent
who hurt their minds,
and urg'd them on with mad desire
to call in haste for their destroyer;
they, only set on sport and play,
unweetingly importun'd
their own destruction to come speedy' upon them.
So fond are mortal men,
fall'n into wrath divine,
as their own ruin on themselves to invite,
insensate left, or to' sense reprobate,
and with blindness internal struck.

2 *Semichor.* But he, tho' blind of sight,
despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,
with inward eyes, illuminated,
his fiery virtue rous'd
from under ashes into sudden flame,

and as an evening dragon came,
assailant on the perched roosts,
and nests in order rang'd
of tame villatic fowl; but as an eagle
his cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So virtue given for lost,
depress'd, and overthrown, as seem'd,
like that self-begotten bird
in the Arabian woods imbost,
that no second knows nor third,
and lay ere while a holocaust,
from out her ashy womb now teem'd,
revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
when most unactive deem'd,
and tho' her body die, her fame survives,
a secular bird ages of lives.

Man. Come, come; no time for lamentation now
nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
like Samson, and heroicly hath finish'd
a life heroic on his enemies
fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,
and lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
through all Philistian bounds, to Israel
honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
to' himself and father's house eternal fame;
and, which is best and happiest yet, all this
with God not parted from him, as was fear'd,
but favouring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
and what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies

soak'd in his enemies' blood, and from the stream
with lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
the clotted gore. I with what speed the while,
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
will send for all my kindred, all my friends,
to fetch him hence, and solemnly attend
with silent obsequy and funeral train
home to his father's house: there will I build him
a monument, and plant it round with shade
of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
with all his trophies hung, and acts enroll'd
in copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
and from his memory enflame their breasts
to matchless valour, and adventures high:
the virgins also shall, on feastful days
visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
his lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
from whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, tho' we oft doubt
what th' unsearchable dispose
of highest Wisdom brings about,
and ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
but unexpectedly returns,
and to his faithful champion hath in place
bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns;
and all that band them to resist
his uncontroulable intent;
his servants he with new acquist
of true experience from this great event,
with peace and consolation hath dismist,
and calm of mind all passion spent.

END OF SAMSON AGONISTES.

COMUS, A MASK,

presented at Ludlow castle, 1634,

BEFORE JOHN, EARL OF BRIDGEWATER,

THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

* TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN LORD VISCOUNT BRACKLY,†

Son and Heir Apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater, &c.

My Lord,

This poem, which received it's first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a final dedication of itself to you. Altho' not openly acknowledged by the author‡, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view; and now to offer it up in all rightful devotion to those fair hopes, and rare endowments of your much promising youth, which give a full assurance, to all that know you, of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name, and receive this as your own, from the hands of him, who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured parents, and as in this representation your attendant Thyrsis, so now in all real expression

Your faithful and most humble servant,

H. LAWES.

THE PERSONS,

The Attendant Spirit, afterwards in the habit of Thyrsis.
Comus, with his Crew.
The Lady.
First Brother.
Second Brother.
Sabrina, the Nymph.

THE CHIEF PERSONS, WHO PRESENTED, WERE

The Lord Brackly.
Mr. Thomas Egerton, his brother.
The Lady Alice Egerton.

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* This is the dedication to Lawes's edition of the Mask, 1637.
† The First Brother in the Mask. Warton.
‡ It never appeared under Milton's name, till the year 1645.

The first Scene discovers a wild Wood.

The Attendant Spirit *descends* or *enters.*

Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
my mansion is, where those immortal shapes
of bright aereal spirits live inspher'd
in regions mild of calm and serene air,
above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
which men call Earth; and, with low-thoughted care
confin'd and pester'd in this pin-fold here,
strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
after this mortal change, to her true servants,
amongst the enthron'd Gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be, that by due steps aspire
to lay their just hands on that golden key,
that opes the palace of Eternity
to such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
with the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
of every salt flood, and each ebbing stream,
took in by lot 'twixt high and nether Jove
imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles,
that, like to rich and various gems, inlay
the unadorned bosom of the deep;
which he, to grace his tributary Gods,
by course commits to several government,
and gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
and wield their little tridents: but this Isle,
the greatest and the best of all the main,
he quarters to his blue-hair'd Deities;
and all this tract that fronts the falling sun

a noble Peer of mickle trust and power
has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
an old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
where his fair offspring, nurs'd in princely lore,
are coming to attend their father's state,
and new-entrusted sceptre; but their way
lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear wood,
the nodding horror of whose shady brows
threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
and here their tender age might suffer peril,
but that by quick command from sovran Jove
I was dispatch'd for their defence and guard:
and listen why; for I will tell you now
what never yet was heard in tale or song,
from old or modern bard, in hall or bower.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
crush'd the sweet poison of misused wine,
after the Tuscan mariners transform'd,
coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
on Circe's island fell: (Who knows not Circe,
the daughter of the Sun? whose charmed cup
whoever tasted, lost his upright shape,
and downward fell into a groveling swine.)
This Nymph, that gaz'd upon his clustering locks
with ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,
had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
much like his father, but his mother more,
whom therefore she brought up, and Comus nam'd:
who, ripe and frolic of his full grown age,
roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
at last betakes him to this ominous wood:
and, in thick shelter of black shades imbower'd,
excels his mother at her mighty art,
offering to every weary traveller

his orient liquor in a crystal glass,
to quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste,
(for most do taste through fond intemperate thirst,)
soon as the potion works, their human countenance,
the express resemblance of the Gods, is chang'd
into some brutish form of wolf, or bear,
or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
all other parts remaining as they were;
and they, so perfect is their misery,
not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
but boast themselves more comely than before;
and all their friends and native home forget,
to roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore when any, favour'd of high Jove,
chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
as now I do: but first I must put off
these my sky-robes spun out of Iris' woof,
and take the weeds and likeness of a swain
that to the service of this house belongs,
who with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
and hush the waving wood; nor of less faith,
and in this office of his mountain watch
likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
of this occasion. But I hear the tread
of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS *enters with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering; they come in, making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

The star that bids the shepherd fold,
now the top of heaven doth hold;
and the gilded car of day
his glowing axle doth allay
in the steep Atlantic stream;
and the slope sun his upward beam
shoots against the dusky pole,
pacing toward the other goal
of his chamber in the East.
Meanwhile welcome Joy, and Feast,
midnight Shout, and Revelry,
tipsy Dance, and Jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed,
and Advice with scrupulous head.
Strict Age and sour Severity,
with their grave saws, in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
imitate the starry quire,
who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
and, on the tawny sands and shelves,
trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain brim,
the wood-nymphs, deck'd with daisies trim,
their merry wakes and pastimes keep;
what hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rites begin;
't is only day-light that makes sin,

which these dun shades will ne'er report.—
Hail, Goddess of nocturnal sport,
dark-veil'd Cotytto! to whom the secret flame
of midnight torches burns; mysterious dame,
that ne'er art call'd, but when the dragon womb
of Stygian darkness spits her thickest gloom,
and makes one blot of all the air;
stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend
us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
of all thy dues be done, and none left out;
ere the blabbing eastern scout,
the nice morn, on the Indian steep
from her cabin'd loop-hole peep,
and to the tell-tale sun descry
our conceal'd solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
in a light fantastic round.

THE MEASURE.

Break off, break off, I feel the different pace
of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds, within these brakes and trees;
our number may affright: some virgin sure
(for so I can distinguish by mine art)
benighted in these woods. Now to my charms,
and to my wily trains; I shall ere long
be well-stock'd with as fair a herd as graz'd
about my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
my dazzling spells into the spungy air,
of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
and give it false presentments, lest the place
and my quaint habits breed astonishment,
and put the damsel to suspicious flight;

which must not be, for that's against my course:
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
and well-plac'd words of glozing courtesy
baited with reasons not unplausible,
wind me into the easy-hearted man,
and hug him into snares. When once her eye
hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager,
whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
and hearken, if I may, her business here.

The LADY *enters.*

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
my best guide now: methought it was the sound
of riot and ill-manag'd merriment,
such as the jocund flute, or gamesome pipe,
stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds;
when for their teeming flocks, and granges full,
in wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
and thank the God amiss. I should be loth
to meet the rudeness, and swill'd insolence,
of such late wassailers; yet O! where else
shall I inform my unacquainted feet
in the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My Brothers, when they saw me wearied out
with this long way, resolving here to lodge
under the spreading favour of these pines,
stept, as they said, to the next thicket side,
to bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
as the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then, when the gray-hooded Even,
like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.

But where they are, and why they came not back
is now the labour of my thoughts; 't is likeliest
they had engag'd their wandering steps too far;
and envious Darkness, ere they could return,
had stole them from me: else, O thievish Night,
why should'st thou, but for some felonious end,
in thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
that Nature hung in Heaven, and fill'd their lamps
with everlasting oil, to give due light
to the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
begin to throng into my memory,
of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
and aery tongues, that syllable men's names
on sands, and shores, and desart wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound,
the virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
by a strong siding champion, Conscience.
O welcome pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,
thou hovering Angel, girt with golden wings,
and thou, unblemish'd form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
that He, the Supreme Good, to' whom all things ill
are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
to keep my life and honour unassail'd.
Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud
turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err, there does a sable cloud
turn forth her silver lining on the night,

and casts a gleam over this tufted grove:
I cannot halloo to my Brothers, but
such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I'll venture; for my new-enliven'd spirits
prompt me; and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG.

Sweet Echo, sweetest Nymph, that liv'st unseen
within thy aery shell,
by slow Meander's margent green,
and in the violet-embroider'd vale,
where the love-lorn nightingale
nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well;
canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
that likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
hid them in some flowery cave,
tell me but where,
sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphere!
so may'st thou be translated to the skies,
and give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies.

Enter COMUS.

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
and with these raptures moves the vocal air
to testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
at every fall smoothing the raven-down
of darkness, till it smil'd! I have oft heard
my mother Circe with the Syrens three,
amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,

culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs;
who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
and lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
and chid her barking waves into attention,
and fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause:
yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
and in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;
but such a sacred and home-felt delight,
such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now.—I 'll speak to her,
and she shall be my queen. Hail, foreign wonder!
whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
unless the Goddess that in rural shrine
dwell'st here with Pan, or Sylvan; by blest song
forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
to touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

Lad. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise,
that is address'd to unattending ears;
not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
how to regain my sever'd company,
compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
to give me answer from her mossy couch. [thus?

Com. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you

Lad. Dim darkness, and this leafy labyrinth.

Com. Could that divide you from near-ushering

Lad. They left me weary on a grassy turf. [guides?

Com. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

Lad. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.

Com. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?

Lad. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.

Com. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

Lad. How easy my misfortune is to hit!

Com. Imports their loss, beside the present need?

Lad. No less than if I should my Brothers lose.
Com. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
Lad. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips.
Com. Two such I saw, what time the labour'd ox
in his loose traces from the furrow came,
and the swink'd hedger at his supper sat;
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
that crawls along the side of yon small hill,
plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
their port was more than human, as they stood;
I took it for a faery vision
of some gay creatures of the element,
that in the colours of the rainbow live,
and play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-struck,
and, as I past, I worshipt; if those you seek,
it were a journey like the path to Heaven,
to help you find them.
Lad. Gentle Villager,
what readiest way would bring me to that place?
Com. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
Lad. To find out that, good Shepherd, I suppose,
in such a scant allowance of star-light,
would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
without the sure guess of well-practis'd feet.
Com. I know each lane, and every alley green,
dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
and every bosky bourn from side to side,
my daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
and if your stray attendance be yet lodg'd,
or shroud within these limits, I shall know
ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
from her thatch'd pallet rouse; if otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady to a low
but loyal cottage, where you may be safe

till further quest.

Lad. Shepherd, I take thy word
and trust thy honest offer'd courtesy,
which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
with smoky rafters, than in tap'stry halls
and courts of princes, where it first was nam'd,
and yet is most pretended: in a place
less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
to my proportion'd strength. Shepherd, lead on.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter the TWO BROTHERS.

El. Br. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
that wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
and disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
in double night of darkness and of shades;
or, if your influence be quite damm'd up
with black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
tho' a rush-candle from the wicker hole
of some clay habitation, visit us
with thy long-levell'd rule of streaming light;
and thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
or Tyrian Cynosure.

Sec. Br. Or, if our eyes
be barr'd that happiness, might we but hear
the folded flocks penn'd in their wattled cotes,
or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
count the night watches to his feathery dames,
't would be some solace yet, some little cheering,
in this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.

But, O that hapless virgin, our lost Sister!
where may she wander now, whither betake her,
from the chill dew, among rude burs and thistles?
perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.
What, if in wild amazement and affright?
or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
of savage hunger, or of savage heat?

El. Br. Peace, Brother; be not over-exquisite
to cast the fashion of uncertain evils:
for grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
what need a man forestall his date of grief,
and run to meet what he would most avoid?
or if they be but false alarms of fear,
how bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my Sister so to seek,
or so unprincipled in Virtue's book,
and the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
as that the single want of light and noise
(not being in danger, as I trust she is not,)
could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
and put them into misbecoming plight.
Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
by her own radiant light, tho' sun and moon
were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
oft seeks to sweet retired solitude;
where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
she plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
that in the various bustle of resort
were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd.
He, that has light within his own clear breast,
may sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
but he, that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,

benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
himself is his own dungeon.

Sec. Br. 'T is most true,
that musing Meditation most effects
the pensive secrecy of desart cell,
far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
and sits as safe as in a senate-house;
for who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
his few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
or do his gray hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye,
to save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
from the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunn'd heaps
of misers' treasure by an outlaw's den,
and tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
danger will wink on Opportunity,
and let a single helpless maiden pass
uninjur'd in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night, or loneliness, it recks me not;
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
of our unowned Sister.

El. Br. I do not, Brother,
infer, as if I thought my Sister's state
secure, without all doubt or controversy;
yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
does arbitrate the' event, my nature is
that I incline to hope, rather than fear,
and gladly banish squint suspicion.
My Sister is not so defenceless left
as you imagine; she has a hidden strength,

which you remember not.

Sec. Br. What hidden strength,
unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?

El. Br. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
which, if Heaven gave it, may be term'd her own:
'tis Chastity, my Brother, Chastity:
she, that has that, is clad in complete steel;
and, like a quiver'd Nymph with arrows keen,
may trace huge forests, and unharbour'd heaths,
infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
where, through the sacred rays of Chastity,
no savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
will dare to soil her virgin purity:
yea there, where very Desolation dwells,
by grots and caverns shagg'd with horrid shades,
she may pass on with unblench'd majesty,
be it not done in pride, or in presumption.
Some say, no evil thing that walks by night
in fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost
that breaks his magic chains at curfeu time,
no goblin, or swart faery of the mine,
hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
antiquity from the old schools of Greece
to testify the arms of Chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
fair silver-shafted queen, for ever chaste,
wherewith she tam'd the brinded lioness
and spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
the frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
fear'd her stern frown, & she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield,
that wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,

wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone,
but rigid looks of chaste austerity,
and noble grace, that dash'd brute violence
with sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly Chastity,
that, when a soul is found sincerely so,
a thousand liveried Angels lackey her,
driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;
and, in clear dream and solemn vision,
tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
till oft converse with heavenly habitants
begin to cast a beam on the' outward shape,
the unpolluted temple of the mind,
and turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
till all be made immortal: but when Lust,
by unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
but most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
lets in defilement to the inward parts,
the soul grows clotted by contagion,
imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
the divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp,
oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres
lingering, and sitting by a new made grave,
as loth to leave the body that it lov'd,
and link'd itself by carnal sensuality
to a degenerate and degraded state.

Sec. Br. How charming is divine Philsosophy!
not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
but musical as is Apollo's lute,
and a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
where no crude surfeit reigns.

El. Br. List, list! I hear
some far off halloo break the silent air.

Sec. B. Methought so too; what should it be?

El. E. For certain
either some one like us night-founder'd here,
or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
some roving robber calling to his fellows.

Sec. B. Heaven keep my Sister. Again, again and near!
best draw, and stand upon our guard.

El. B. I'll halloo:
if he be friendly, he comes well; if not,
defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us.

Enter the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd.*

That hallo I should know; what are you? speak;
come not too near, you fall on iron stakes else.

Spir. What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again.

Sec. B. O Brother, 't is my father's shepherd, sure.

El. B. Thyrsis? Whose artful strains have oft delay'd
the huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
and sweeten'd every muskrose of the dale?
how cam'st thou here, good swain? hath any ram
slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
how could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook?

Spir. O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
as a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth
of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth,
that doth enrich these downs, is worth a thought
to this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, O my virgin Lady, where is she?
how chance she is not in your company?

El. B. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame,

or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

El. B. What fears, good Thyrsis? Pr'ythee briefly

Spir. I'll tell ye; 't is not vain or fabulous, [shew.
(Tho' so esteem'd by shallow ignorance,)
what the sage poets, taught by the' heavenly Muse,
storied of old in high immortal verse,
of dire chimeras, and enchanted isles,
and rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;
for such there be, but unbelief is blind.

Within the navel of this hideous wood,
immur'd in cypress shades a sorcerer dwells,
of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries;
and here to ever thirsty wanderer
by sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
with many murmurs mix'd, whose pleasing poison
the visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
and the inglorious likeness of a beast
fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
character'd in the face: this have I learnt
tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts,
that brow this bottom-glade; whence night by night
he and his monstrous rout are heard to howl,
like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
doing abhorred rites to Hecate
in their obscured haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits, and guileful spells,
to' inveigle and invite the' unwary sense
of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank

with ivy canopied and interwove
with flaunting honey-suckle, and began,
wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
to meditate my rural minstrelsy,
till Fancy had her fill; but, ere a close,
the wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
and fill'd the air with barbarous dissonance;
at which I ceas'd, and listen'd them a while,
till an unusual stop of sudden silence
gave respite to the drowsy frighted steeds,
that draw the litter of close-curtain'd Sleep;
at last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
and stole upon the air, that even Silence
was took ere she was ware, and wish'd she might
deny her nature, and be never more,
still to be so displac'd. I was ear,
and took in strains that might create a soul
under the ribs of Death! but O! ere long,
too well I did perceive it was the voice
of my most honour'd Lady, your dear Sister.
Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear,
and, O poor hapless nightingale, thought I,
how sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!
then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
through paths and turnings often trod by day,
till, guided by mine ear, I found the place,
where that damn'd wisard, hid in sly disguise,
(for so by certain signs I knew,) had met
already ere my best speed could prevent,
the aidless innocent Lady, his wish'd prey;
who gently ask'd if he had seen such two,
supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess'd

ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung,
into swift flight, till I had found you here;
but further know I not.

Sec. Br. O night, and shades!
how are ye join'd with Hell in triple knot
against the' unarmed weakness of one virgin
alone, and helpless! Is this the confidence
you gave me, Brother?

El. Br. Yes, and keep it still;
lean on it safely; not a period
shall be unsaid for me: against the threats
of malice, or of sorcery, or that power
which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm,—
virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
yea, even that, which mischief meant most harm,
shall in the happy trial prove most glory:
but evil on itself shall back recoil,
and mix no more with goodness; when at last
gather'd like scum, and settled to itself,
it shall be in eternal restless change
self-fed, and self-consumed: if this fail,
the pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
and earth's base built on stubble.—But come, let's on.
Against the' opposing will and arm of Heaven
may never this just sword be lifted up;
but for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
with all the grisly legions that troop
under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'twixt Africa and Ind, I 'll find him out,
and force him to return his purchase back,
or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
curs'd as his life.

Spir. Alas! good venturous Youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
but here thy sword can do thee little stead;
far other arms and other weapons must
be those, that quell the might of hellish charms:
he with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
and crumble all thy sinews.

El. Br. Why pr'ythee, Shepherd,
how durst thou then thyself approach so near
as to make this relation?

Spir. Care, and utmost shifts,
how to secure the lady from surprisal,
brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
in every virtuous plant, and healing herb,
that spreads her verdant leaf to th' morning ray:
he lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing;
which when I did, he on the tender grass
would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
and in requital ope his leathern scrip,
and shew me simples of a thousand names,
telling their strange and vigorous faculties:
among the rest a small unsightly root,
but of divine effect, he cull'd me out;
the leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
but in another country, as he said,
bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain
treads on it daily with his clouted shoon:
and yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly,
that Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave;
he call'd it Hæmony, and gave it me,
and bade me keep it as of sovran use
'gainst all enchantments, mildew, blast, or damp,

or ghastly furies' apparition.
I purs'd it up, but little reckoning made,
till now that this extremity compell'd:
but now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter though disguis'd,
enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,
and yet came off: if you have this about you,
(as I will give you when we go) you may
boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
where if he be, with dauntless hardihood,
and brandish'd blade, rush on him; break his glass,
and shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
but seize his wand; though he and his curs'd crew
fierce sign of battle make, and menace high
or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke,
yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

El. Br. Thyrsis, lead on apace, I 'll follow thee;
and some good Angel bear a shield before us.

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and the* LADY *set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

COMUS.

Nay, Lady, sit; if I but wave this wand,
your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster,
and you a statue, or, as Daphne was,
root-bound, that fled Apollo.

Lad. Fool, do not boast;
thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
with all thy charms, although this corporal rind
thou hast immanacled, while Heaven sees good.

Com. Why are you vex'd, Lady? Why do you frown?
here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
sorrow flies far: see, here be all the pleasures
that Fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
when the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first, behold this cordial julep here,
that flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
with spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mix'd:
not that Nepenthes, which the wife of Thone
in Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
is of such power to stir up joy as this,
to life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
and to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
for gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
and harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
with that which you receiv'd on others terms;
scorning the unexempt condition,
by which all mortal frailty must subsist,
refleshment after toil, ease after pain,
that have been tir'd all day without repast,
and timely rest have wanted; but, fair Virgin,
this will restore all soon.

Lad. 'T will not, false traitor!
't will not restore the truth and honesty,
that thou hast banish'd from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage, and the safe abode,
thou toldst me of? What grim aspects are these,
these ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver!
hast thou betray'd my credulous innocence

with visor'd falsehood and base forgery?
and would'st thou seek again to trap me here
with lickerish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer; none
but such as are good men can give good things;
and that which is not good is not delicious
to a well-govern'd and wise appetite.

Com. O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
to those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
and fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
praising the lean and sallow Abstinence.
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
with such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
but all to please and sate the curious taste?
and set to work millions of spinning worms,
that in their green shops weave the smooth'd-hair'd [silk,
to deck her sons; and, that no corner might
be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
she hutch'd the' all-worshipt ore, and precious gems,
to store her children with: if all the world
should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,
drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
the' All-giver would be unthank'd, would be unprais'd,
not half his riches known, and yet despis'd;
and we should serve him as a grudging master,
as a penurious niggard of his wealth;
and live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
who would be quite surcharg'd with her own weight,
and strangled with her waste fertility; [plumes,
the' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark'd with
the herds would over-multitude their lords,

the sea o'erfraught would swell, and the' unsought diamonds
would so imblaze the forehead of the deep,
and so bestud with stars, that they below
would grow inur'd to light, and come at last
to gaze upon the sun with shameles brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozen'd
with that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
but must be current; and the good thereof
consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
unsavoury in the' enjoyment of itself;
if you let slip time, like a neglected rose
it withers on the stalk with languish'd head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
in courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
where most may wonder at the workmanship;
it is for homely features, to keep home,
they had their name thence; coarse complexions,
and cheeks of sorry gain, will serve to ply
the sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool
what need a vermeil-tinctur'd lip for that,
love-darting eyes, or tresses like the Morn?
there was another meaning in these gifts;
think what, and be advis'd; you are but young yet.

Lad. I had not thought to have unlock'd my lips
in this unhallow'd air, but that this juggler
would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
obtruding false rules prank'd in reason's garb.
I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments,
and Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
as if she would her children should be riotous
with her abundance; she, good cateress,

means her provision only to the good,
that live according to her sober laws,
and holy dictate of spare Temperance:
if every just man, that now pines with want,
had but a moderate and beseeming share
of that which lewdly-pamper'd Luxury
now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
nature's full blessings would be well dispens'd
in unsuperfluous even proportion,
and she no whit incumber'd with her store;
and then the Giver would be better thank'd,
his praise due paid: for swinish Gluttony
ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
but with besotted base ingratitude
crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
or have I said enough? To him that dares
arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
against the sun-clad power of Chastity,
fain would I something say, yet to what end?
thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
the sublime notion, and high mystery,
that must be utter'd to unfold the sage
and serious doctrine of Virginity;
and thou art worthy that thou should'st not know
more happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
that hath so well been taught her dazzling fence;
thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc'd:
yet, should I try, the uncontrolled worth
of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
to such a flame of sacred vehemence
that dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
and the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
till all thy magic structures, rear'd so high,

were shatter'd into heaps o'er thy false head.

Com. She fables not; I feel that I do fear
her words set off by some superior power;
and though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
speaks thunder, and the chains of Erebus,
to some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
and try her yet more strongly. Come, no more;
this is mere moral babble, and direct
against the canon laws of our foundation;
I must not suffer this; yet 't is but the lees
and settlings of a melancholy blood:
but this will cure all straight; one sip of this
will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,
beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground; his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in.*

SPIRIT.

What, have you let the false enchanter 'scape?
O ye mistook, ye should have snatch'd his wand,
and bound him fast; without his rod revers'd,
and backward mutters of dissevering power,
we cannot free the Lady that sits here
in stony fetters fix'd, and motionless:
yet stay, be not disturb'd: now I bethink me,
some other means I have which may be us'd,
which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
the soothest shepherd that e'er pip'd on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,
that with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream,

Sabrina is her name, a virgin pure;
whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
that had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
of her enraged stepdame Guendolen,
commended her fair innocence to the flood,
that staid her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom play'd,
held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;
who piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,
and gave her to his daughters to imbathe
in nectar'd lavers, strew'd with asphodel;
and through the porch and inlet of each sense
dropt in ambrosial oils, till she reviv'd,
and underwent a quick immortal change,
made Goddess of the river: still she retains
her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs
that the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
which she will precious vial'd liquors heals;
for which the shepherds at their festivals
carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
and throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
the clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell.
If she be right invok'd in warbled song;
for maidenhood she loves and will be swift
to aid a virgin, such as was herself,
in hard-besetting need; this will I try,
and add the power of some adjuring verse.

SONG.

Sabrina fair,
listen where thou art sitting
under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
in twisted braids of lilies knitting
the loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
listen for dear honour's sake,
goddess of the silver lake,
listen, and save.
Listen, and appear to us,
in name of great Oceanus;
by the' earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
and Tethys' grave majestic pace,
by hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
and the Carpathian wisard's hook,
by scaly Triton's winding shell,
and old sooth-saying Glaucus' spell,
by Leucothea's lovely hands,
and her Son that rules the strands,
by Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet,
and the songs of Syrens sweet,
by dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
and fair Ligea's golden comb,
wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
sleeking her soft alluring locks;
by all the Nymphs that nightly dance
upon thy streams with wily glance,
rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head,
from thy coral-paven bed,
and bridle in thy headlong wave,
till thou our summons answer'd have.
Listen, and save.

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water-Nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringed bank,
where grows the willow, and the osier dank,
my sliding chariot stays,
thick set with agate, and the azure sheen
of turkis blue, and emerald green,
that in the channel strays;
whilst from off the waters fleet
thus I set my printless feet
o'er the cowslip's velvet head,
that bends not as I tread;
gentle Swain, at thy request,
I am here.

Sp. Goddess dear,
we implore thy powerful hand
to undo the charmed band
of true virgin here distrest,
through the force, and through the wile,
of unblest enchanter vile.

Sabr. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
to help ensnared chastity:
brightest Lady, look on me;
thus I sprinkle on thy breast
drops, that from my fountain pure
I have kept, of precious cure;
thrice upon thy finger's tip,
thrice upon thy rubied lip:
next this marble venom'd seat
smear'd with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold:——
now the spell hath lost his hold;
and I must haste, ere morning hour,
to wait in Amphitrite's bower.

SABRINA *descends, and the* LADY *rises out of her seat.*

Sp. Virgin daughter of Locrine
sprung of old Anchises' line,
may thy brimmed waves for this
their full tribute never miss
from a thousand petty rills,
that tumble down the snowy hills:
summer drouth, or singed air,
never scorch thy tresses fair,
nor wet October's torrent flood
thy molten crystal fill with mud:
may the billows roll ashore
the beryl and the golden ore;
may thy lofty head be crown'd
with many a tower and terrace round,
and here and there thy banks upon
with groves of myrrh and cinnamon.

Come, Lady, while Heaven lends us grace,
let us fly this cursed place,
lest the sorcerer us entice
with some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound,
till we come to holier ground;
I shall be your faithful guide
through this gloomy covert wide,
and not many furlongs thence
is your Father's residence,
where this night are met in state
many a friend to gratulate
his wish'd presence; and beside
all the swains, that there abide,
with jigs and rural dance resort;
we shall catch them at their sport,

and our sudden coming there
will double all their mirth and cheer;
come, let us haste, the stars grow high,
but night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the President's castle; then come in Country Dancers, after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the Two* BROTHERS, *and the* LADY.

SONG.

Sp. Back, Shepherds, back; enough your play,
till next sun-shine holiday;
here be, without duck or nod,
other trippings to be trod,
of lighter toes, and such court guise
as Mercury did first devise,
with the mincing dryades,
on the lawns, and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord, and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight;
here behold so goodly grown
three fair branches of your own
heaven hath timely tried their youth,
their faith, their patience, and their truth,
and sent them here through hard assays
with a crown of deathless praise.
To triumph in victorious dance
o'er sensual Folly and Intemperance.

The Dances ended, the SPIRIT *epiloguises.*

Sp. To the ocean now I fly,
and those happy climes that lie
where day never shuts his eye,
up in the broad fields of the sky:
there I suck the liquid air
all amidst the gardens fair
of Hesperus, and his daughters three
that sing about the golden tree:
along the crisped shades and bowers
revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
the Graces, and the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
thither all their bounties bring;
there eternal Summer dwells,
and West-Winds, with musky wing,
about the cedar'n alleys fling
Nard and Cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
waters the odorous banks, that blow
flowers of more mingled hue
than her purfled scarf can shew;
and drenches with Elysian dew
(list, mortals, if your ears be true,)
beds of hyacinth and roses,
where young Adonis oft reposes,
waxing well of his deep wound
in slumber soft, and on the ground
sadly sits the' Assyrian queen:
but far above in spangled sheen
celestial Cupid, her fam'd son, advanc'd,
holds his dear Psyche sweet entranc'd,
after her wandering labours long,
till free consent the Gods among

make her his eternal bride,
and from her fair unspotted side
two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done,
I can fly, or I can run,
quickly to the green earth's end,
where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend;
and from thence can soar as soon
to the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
love Virtue; she alone is free:
she can teach ye how to climb
higher than the sphery chime;
or if Virtue feeble were,
heaven itself would stoop to her.

L'ALLEGRO.

Hence loathed Melancholy,
of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
in Stygian cave forlorn,
'mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy,
find out some uncouth cell,
where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
and the night raven sings:
there under ebon shades and low-brow'd rocks,
as ragged as thy locks,
in dark Cimerian desart ever dwell.
But come, thou goddess fair and free,
in heaven, yclep'd Euphrosyne,
and by men, heart-easing Mirth,
whom lovely Venus at a birth
with two sister graces more
to ivy-crowned Bacchus bore;
or whether (as some sages sing)
the frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
as he met her once a-maying,
there on beds of violets blue,
and fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew
fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,
so buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks, and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks, and wreathed Smiles,
such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
and love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,

and Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it as you go
on the light fantastic toe,
and in thy right-hand lead with thee
the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
and if I give thee honour due,
Mirth admit me of thy crew,
to live with her, and live with thee,
in unreproved pleasures free;
to hear the lark begin his flight,
and, singing, startle the dull Night,
from his watch-tower in the skies,
till the dappled dawn doth rise:
then to come, in spite of Sorrow,
and at my window bid good-morrow,
through the sweet-brier, or the vine,
or the twisted eglantine:
while the cock with lively din
scatters the rear of Darkness thin,
and to the stack, or the barn-door,
stoutly struts his dames before:
oft list'ning how the hounds and horn,
cheerly rouse the slumb'ring Morn,
from the side of some hoar hill,
through the high wood echoing shrill:
some time walking, not unseen,
by hedge-row elms on hillocks green,
right against the eastern gate,
where the great Sun begins his state,
rob'd in flames, and amber light,
the clouds in thousand liveries dight,
while the plough-man near at hand
whistles o'er the furrow'd land,
and the milk-maid singeth blithe,

and the mower whets his sythe,
and every shepherd tells his tale
under the hawthorn in the dale.
Strait mine eye hath caught new pleasures
whilst the landscape round it measures,
russet lawns, and fallows gray,
where the nibbling flocks do stray,
mountains on whose barren breast
the lab'ring clouds do often rest,
meadows trim, with daisies pied,
shallow brooks and rivers wide.
Towers and battlements it sees
bosom'd high in tufted trees.
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
the Cynosure of neighb'ring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes,
from betwixt two aged oaks,
where Corydon and Thyrsis met,
are at their savory dinner set
of herbs, and other country messes,
which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
and then in haste her bower she leaves,
with Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
or if the earlier season lead
to the tann'd haycock in the mead.
Sometimes with secure delight
the upland hamlets will invite,
when the merry bells ring round,
and the jocund rebecks sound
to many a youth, and many a maid,
dancing in the chequer'd shade;
and young and old come forth to play
on a sunshine holy-day,
till the live-long day-light fail;

then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
with stories told of many a feat,
how fairy Mab the junkets eat;
she was pincht and pull'd, she said;
and he, by friar's lantern led,
tells how the drudging goblin sweat,
to earn his cream-bowl duly set,
when in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
his shadowy flail hath thrash'd the corn
that ten day-labourers could not end;
then lies him down the lubbar fiend,
and stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
basks at the fire his hairy strength,
and crop-full out of doors he flings,
ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
by whisp'ring winds soon lull'd asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
and the busy hum of men,
where throngs of knights and barons bold
in weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
with store of ladies, whose bright eyes
rain influence, and judge the prize
of wit, or arms, while both contend
to win her grace, whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
in saffron robe, with taper clear,
and Pomp, and Feast, and Revelry,
with Mask and antique Pageantry,
such sights as youthful poets dream,
on summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
if Jonson's learned sock be on,
or sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,

warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever against eating cares,
lap me in soft Lydian airs,
married to immortal Verse;
such as the meeting soul may pierce
in notes with many a winding bout
of linked sweetness long drawn out,
with wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
the melting voice through mazes running,
untwisting all the chains that tie
the hidden soul of harmony;
that Orpheus' self may heave his head
from golden slumber on a bed
of heap'd Elysian flowers, and hear
such strains as would have won the ear
of Pluto, to have quite set free
his half regain'd Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO.

Hence vain deluding Joys,
the brood of Folly, without father bred,
how little you bested,
or fill the fixed mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
and fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
as thick and numberless
as the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
or likeliest hovering dreams,
the fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But hail thou goddess, sage and holy,
hail, divinest Melancholy!

whose saintly visage is too bright
to hit the sense of human sight,
and therefore to our weaker view
o'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
black, but such as in esteem,
prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
or that starr'd Ethiop queen that strove
to set her beauties' praise above
the sea-nymphs, and their powers offended:
yet thou art higher far descended;
thee bright-hair'd Vesta, long of yore,
to solitary Saturn bore;
his daughter she, (in Saturn's reign
such mixture was not held a stain)
oft in glimmering bowers and glades
he met her, and in secret shades
of woody Ida's inmost grove,
while yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
sober, stedfast, and demure,
all in a robe of darkest grain,
flowing with majestic train,
and sable stole of Cyprus lawn,
over thy decent shoulders drawn;
come, but keep thy wonted state,
with even step, and musing gate,
and looks commercing with the skies,
thy wrapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
there held in holy passion still,
forget thyself to marble, till
with a sad leaden downward cast
thou fix them on the earth as fast:
and join with thee calm Peace, and Quiet,
spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,

and hears the Muses in a ring
aye round about Jove's altar sing:
and add to these retired Leisure,
that in trim gardens takes it's pleasure;
but first and chiefest with thee bring,
him that yon soars on golden wing,
guiding the fiery-wheeled throne,
the cherub Contemplation;
and the mute Silence hist along,
'less Philomel will deign a song,
in her sweetest, saddest plight,
smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
while Cynthia checks her dragon yoke,
gently o'er th' accustom'd oak;
sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of Folly,
most musical, most melancholy!
thee chauntress oft the woods among
I woo to hear thy even-song;
and missing thee, I walk unseen
on the dry smooth-shaven green,
to behold the wand'ring moon,
riding near her highest noon,
like one that had been led astray
through the heaven's wide pathless way,
and oft, as if her head she bow'd,
stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfeu sound,
over some wide-water'd shore,
swinging slow with sullen roar;
or, if the air will not permit,
some still removed place will fit,
where glowing embers through the room
teach Light to counterfeit a gloom;

far from all resort of mirth,
save the cricket on the hearth,
or the bellman's drowsy charm,
to bless the doors from nightly harm:
or let my lamp at midnight hour
be seen in some high lonely tower,
where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
with thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
the spirit of Plato, to unfold
what worlds, or what vast regions hold
the immortal mind that hath forsook
her mansion in this fleshy nook:
and of those demons that are found
in fire, air, flood, or under ground,
whose power hath a true consent
with planet, or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
in scepter'd pall come sweeping by,
presenting Thebes', or Pelops' line
or the tale of Troy divine,
or what (tho' rare) of later age
ennobled hath the buskin'd stage.
But, O sad Virgin, that thy power
might raise Musæus from his bower,
or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
such notes as warbled to the string,
drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
and made Hell grant what Love did seek.
Or call up him that left half told,
the story of Cambuscan bold,
of Camball, and of Agarsife,
and who had Canace to wife,
that own'd the virtuous ring and glass,
and of the wond'rous horse of brass,

on which the Tartar king did ride;
and if ought else great bards beside
in sage and solemn tunes have sung,
of turneys and of trophies hung,
of forests and enchantments drear
where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus Night oft see me in thy pale career,
till civil-suited Morn appear,
not trick'd and frounc'd as she was wont
with the Attic boy to hunt,
but kercheft in a comely cloud,
while rocking winds are piping loud,
or usher'd with a shower still,
when the gust hath blown his fill,
ending on the rustling leaves,
with minute drops from off the eaves.
And when the sun begins to fling
his flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
to arched walks of twilight groves,
and shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
of pine, or monumental oak,
where the rude ax with heaved stroke
was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
or fright them from their hallow'd haunt;
there in close covert by some brook,
where no profaner eye may look,
hide me from Day's garish eye,
while the bee with honied thigh,
that at her flowery work doth sing,
and the waters murmuring,
with such consort as they keep,
entice the dewy-feather'd sleep:
and let some strange mysterious dream
wave at his wings in aery stream

of lively portraiture display'd,
softly on my eye-lids laid.
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
above, about, or underneath,
sent by some spirit to mortals good,
or th' unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
to walk the studious cloysters pale,
and love the high embowed roof,
with antic pillars, massy proof,
and storied windows richly dight,
casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
to the full-voic'd quire below,
in service high, and anthems clear,
as may with sweetness through mine ear,
dissolve me into ecstasies,
and bring all heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
find out the peaceful hermitage,
the hairy gown and mossy cell,
where I may sit and rightly spell
of every star that heaven doth shew,
and every herb that sips the dew;
till old Experience do attain
to something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
and I with thee will choose to live.

LYCIDAS.

In this monody the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637, and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more
ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,

I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
and with forc'd finger rude
shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,
compels me to disturb your season due:
for Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer:
who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
without the meed of some melodious tear.

Begin then, Sisters of the sacred well,
that from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,
so may some gentle muse
with lucky words favour my destin'd urn,
and as he passes turn,
and bid fair peace be to my sable shroud:
for we were nurst upon the self-same hill,
fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.
Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd
under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
we drove afield, and both together heard
what time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
oft till the star, that rose at evening bright,
towards heaven's descent had sloop'd his westering wheel.
Mean while the rural ditties were not mute,
temper'd to th' oaten flute,
rough satyrs danc'd, and fauns with cloven heel
from the glad sound would not be absent long,
and old Damætas lov'd to hear our song.

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee, shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves
with wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
and all their echoes mourn.
The willows and the hazel copses green,
shall now no more be seen,
fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear
when first the white thorn blows;
such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherds' ear.

Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless deep
clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas?
for neither were ye playing on the steep,
where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream;
ay me! I fondly dream!
had ye been there, for what could that have done?
what could the muse herself that Orpheus bore,
the muse herself, for her enchanting son,
whom universal nature did lament,
when by the rout that made the hideous roar,
his goary visage down the stream was sent,
down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care
to tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade,
and strictly meditate the thankless muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
to sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise

(that last infirmity of noble mind)
to scorn delights and live laborious days;
but the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
and think to burst out into sudden blaze,
comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears,
and slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus reply'd, and touch'd my trembling ears;
"fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
nor in the glistering foil
set off to th' world, nor in broad rumour lies,
but lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
and perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
as he pronounces lastly on each deed,
of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd flood,
smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds!
that strain I heard was of a higher mood:
but now my oat proceeds,
and listens to the herald of the sea
that came in Neptune's plea:
he ask'd the waves and ask'd the felon winds,
what hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
and question'd every gust of rugged winds
that blows from off each beak'd promontory;
they knew not of his story,
and sage Hippotades their answer brings,
that not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd;
the air was calm, and on the level brine
sleek Panope with all her sisters play'd.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
that sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
his mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,

inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
like to that sanguine flower, inscrib'd with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft (quoth he) my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
the pilot of the Galilean lake;
two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
(the golden opes, the iron shuts amain;)
he shook his miter'd locks, and stern bespake,
"How well could I have spar'd for thee, young swain,
enow of such as for their bellies' sake
creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make,
than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
and shrove away the worthy bidden guest; [hold
blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to
a sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least
that to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!
what recks it them? what need they? they are sped;
and when they list, their lean and flashy songs
grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
the hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
but swoll'n with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
daily devours apace, and nothing fed,
but that two-handed engine at the door,
stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past
that shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
and call the vales, and bid them hither cast
their bells, and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
on whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,

throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,
that on the green turf suck the honied showers,
and purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
the tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
the white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet,
the glowing violet,
the musk-rose, and the well attir'd woodbine,
with cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
and every flower that sad embroidery wears:
bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
and daffodillies fill their cups with tears,
to strew the laureat herse where Lycid lies.
For so to interpose a little ease,
let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas,
wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurl'd,
whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
or whether thou, to our moist vows deny'd,
sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
where the great vision of the guarded mount
looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;
look homeward, angel, now, and melt with ruth:
and O, ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
for Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
sunk tho' he be beneath the watery floor;
so sinks the day-star in the ocean bed:
and yet anon repairs his drooping head,
and tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore
flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
so Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high.

Through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves,
where, other groves and other streams along,
with nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
and hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
in the blest kingdoms meek of Joy and Love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
in solemn troops and sweet societies,
that sing, and, singing, in their glory move
and wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
henceforth thou art the genius of the shore,
in thy large recompense, and shalt be good
to all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' oaks and rills
while the still Morn went out with sandals gray,
he touch'd the tender stops of various quills,
with eager thought warbling his Doric lay;
and now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills,
and now was dropt into the western bay:
at last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue:
to-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

SONG. ON MAY MORNING.

Now the bright morning star, day's harbinger,
comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
the flowery May, who from her green lap throws
the yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.
Hail! bounteous May, that dost inspire
mirth, and youth, and warm desire;
woods and groves are of thy dressing,
hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
and welcome thee, and wish thee long.

ON SHAKSPEARE.

1630.

What needs my Shakspeare for his honour'd bones
the labour of an age in piled stones,
or that his hallowed relics should be hid
under a starry-pointing pyramid?
Dear son of Memory, great heir of Fame,
what need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,
hast built thyself a live-long monument.
For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavouring Art
thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
then thou our fancy of itself bereaving,
dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
and, so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie,
that kings, for such a tomb would wish to die.

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER,

who sickened in the time of his vacancy, being forbid to go to London by reason of the plague. He died Jan. 1, 1630.

Here lies, old Hobson; Death hath broke his girt,
and here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt;
or else the ways being foul, twenty to one,
he's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.
'T was such a shifter, that, if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down;
for he had many time this ten years full
dodg'd with him, betwixt Cambridge and the Bull.
And surely Death could never have prevail'd,
had not his weekly course of carriage fail'd;

but lately finding him so long at home,
and thinking now his journey's end was come,
and that he had ta'en up his latest inn,
in the kind office of a chamberlin,
shew'd him his room where he must lodge that night,
pull'd off his boots, and took away the light.
If any ask for him, it shall be said,
'Hobson has supt, and 's newly gone to bed.'

SONNET. TO CYRIAC SKINNER.

Cyriac, this three-years-day these eyes, tho' clear,
to outward view, of blemish, or of spot,
bereft of light, their seeing have forgot,
nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,
or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
the conscience, friend, t' have lost them over-ply'd
in Liberty's defence, my noble task,
of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain
content, tho' blind, had I no better guide. [mask

SONNET. ON HIS DECEASED WIFE.

Methought I saw my late espoused saint
brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave,
whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
rescu'd from death by force, tho' pale and faint.
Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint
purification in the old law did save,
and such, as yet once more I trust to have
full sight of her in heaven without restraint,

came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight
love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
so clear, as in no face with more delight.
But O, as to embrace me she inclin'd,
I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

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G. Nicholson, Stourport.

POEMS
by
THOMAS PARNELL, D.D.
containing
The Hermit
and
other Pieces,
with the Authors Life.

J. Chapman sculp.t

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THE LIFE OF PARNELL.

For the few materials which compose the life of Parnell, the world is indebted to the industry of Dr. Goldsmith. It is much to be regretted that so masterly a writer had not the means of being more completely informed; for he had no acquaintance with Parnell, and acknowledges, that he was "obliged to take his character from such as knew but little of him, or who perhaps could have given very little information if they had known more." Goldsmith's narrative, however, appears to be the result of much activity of research. His plan has been adopted by Dr. Johnson, who, with unusual candour, remarks, "The life of Parnell is a task which I should very willingly decline, since it has been lately written by Dr. Goldsmith, a man of such variety of powers, and such felicity of performance, that he always seemed to do best that which he was doing; a man who had the art of being minute without tediousness; and general without confusion; whose language was copious, without exuberance; exact, without constraint; and easy, without weakness. What such an author has told who would tell again? I have made an abstract from his larger narrative; and have this gratification from my attempt, that it gives me an opportunity of paying due tribute to the memory of Goldsmith." Thomas Parnell was descended from an ancient family, which had for some centuries been settled at Congleton, in Cheshire. His father, who had attached to the

Commonwealth party, on the Restoration went over to Ireland, and purchased estates there, which, together with his possessions in Cheshire, descended to our poet; on which Goldsmith remarks, that, for this cause, "Want, which has compelled many of our greatest men into the service of the Muses, had no influence on Parnell; he was a poet by inclination." Parnell was born in Dublin in 1679; and, after the usual education at a grammar school, admitted, at the age of thirteen, into Trinity College; from which it may be inferred, that he had made a great progress in learning; as they are more strict in their examination for entrance there than either at Oxford or Cambridge. "His progress (says Goldsmith) through the College course of study was probably marked with but little splendour; his imagination might have been too warm to relish the cold logic of Bugersdicius, or the dreary subtleties of Smiglesius; but it is certain, that, as a classical scholar, few could equal him. His own compositions shew this; and the deference which the most eminent men of his time paid him, put it beyond a doubt." In 1700 he took the degree of Master of Arts, and was in the same year ordained a Deacon, having obtained a dispensation from the primate, as being under twenty-three years of age. About three years after he was admitted into Priest's orders; and in 1705 preferred to the Archdeaconry of Clogher. About the same time, also, he married Miss Anne Minchin, an amiable lady, by whom he had two sons, who died young, and a daughter, who long survived him. His happy disposition for society procured him the friendship of persons of every rank and party, as appears from the extensiveness of

his connections, even before he made any figure in the literary world. Great contentions prevailed at that time between the Whigs and Tories. At the head of one party were Addison, Steele, and Congreve; at that of the other, Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot. "Parnell (says Goldsmith) was a friend to both sides; and, with a liberality becoming a scholar, scorned all those trifling distinctions, which are noisy for the time, and ridiculous to posterity."

At the end of Queen Anne's reign, however, when the Whig Ministry was dismissed, he attached himself to the Tory party, not without much censure from his friends in Ireland, who imputed his desertion to the influence of Swift, by whom he was introduced to Harley, Earl of Oxford. When his Lordship was told that Dr. Parnell waited among the crowd in the outer room, he went, at the intimation of Swift, with his treasurer's staff in his hand, to enquire for him, and bid him welcome; and afterwards admitted him among the number of his most intimate friends, as may be inferred from the following lines in Pope's Dedication:

> For him thou oft hast bid the world attend,
> fond to forget the statesman in the friend.
> For Swift and him despis'd the farce of state,
> the sober follies of the wise and great;
> dext'rous the craving, fawning crowd to quit,
> and pleas'd to 'scape from flattery to wit.

His wit, pleasantry, and classical erudition, procured him admission into the society called the *Scriblerus Club*, formed by Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, Swift, and Jervas. It is probable that the club began with Parnell; for it is not mentioned during his intimacy with Addison, Steele, and Congreve, previous to his connection with the Tory Ministry. Few

societies have been productive of a greater variety of frolics and whimsical conceits. These wits wrote many things in conjunction. Gay usually was amanuensis. Of those joint productions, in which Parnell had a principal share, the *Origin of the Sciences from the Monkies of Ethiopia,* is particularly mentioned. This connection tended to advance the fame and interests of all. They submitted their productions to the review of each other and readily adopted alterations, dictated by taste and judgment, unmixed with envy or any sinister motive. How long the society continued cannot be exactly ascertained. Pope was particularly partial to Parnell's company, and appears to have been under literary obligations to him, in the translation of "Homer." Of the *Life of Homer,* prefixed to the translation of the "Iliad," Pope has given contradictory accounts. At one time he asserts, that "it is still stiff, and was written still stiffer; as it is, I verily think, it cost me more pains in the correcting than the writing would have done:" at another time, he says to Parnell, "if I were to tell you, the thing I wish above all things, it is to see you again; the next is to see your treatise of *Zoilus,* with the *Batrachomuomachia,* and the *Pervigilium Veneris,* both which poems are masterpieces in their several kinds, and I question not, the prose is as excellent in it's sort as the *Essay on Homer.*" It is not difficult to perceive that Pope here flatters his friend too grossly. It appears, however, that his friendship for Parnell was not insincere. The benevolence and integrity of Parnell's disposition remains unimpeached; and Pope, tho' subject to starts of passion and of envy, never let an occasion of being serviceable to

him escape. Parnell was a contributor to the "Spectator" and "Guardian." When it is considered that he wrote purely for the sake of writing, it is probable that more pieces were published than he chose to own, and it is certain that he wrote more than he published. Poverty was the lot of Gay, and he seems not to have been so proud as to have rejected the copy-money which Parnell received, and which he was accustomed to dispose of to him, as appears from a letter of Mr. Pope's to Parnell, who desires to know on what terms he is to deal with the bookseller respecting the sale of two of his works, and whether he designed the copy-money for Gay, as he had mentioned. This trait exhibits Parnell in the character of a generous and sincere friend. The important connections which Parnell had formed, afforded every reasonable ground for expectations of high preferment in the church, and he applied himself, with applause to the display of his elocution in the pulpits of London. Unfortunately it was at this time that Queen Anne died; his expectations therefore terminated; and he relaxed into indolence. To this disappointment was added the affliction of losing his wife, an event which is believed to have made an indelible impression on his spirits; for Pope represents, that he immediately fell into the intemperance of wine.

At this time his personal interest among his friends, excited their attention to his preferment. Swift warmly recommended him to Archbishop King, who gave him a prebend in 1713; and on the 31st of May, 1716, presented him with the vicarage of Finglass, in the diocese of Dublin, worth £400 a year. His gratitude is beautifully expressed in an encomiastic po-

em on *Swift's* birth-day, 1713. This exaltation, however, came when it was least necessary; his attachment to life had fled. The death of his wife was an event which he never was able to recover. He courted the muses no longer. He could not endure solitude. He began therefore to throw himself into every company, and to seek from wine, if not relief, insensibility. This resource, at first recurred to from distraction of mind, was soon rendered necessary by the power of habit. His constitution, from whatever cause, gave way, and his end was now approaching. He enjoyed his preferment little more than a single year. The term of his poetic existence was not more than ten years. He died at Chester, on his way to Ireland, in July 1717, in the thirty-eight year of his age; and was buried in Trinity-church, in that city, without any monument to mark the place of his interment. He left no male issue, and his estate devolved to his only nephew, Sir John Parnell, bart. whose father was younger brother to the Archdeacon, and one of the justices of the King's-bench in Ireland. Parnell's compositions were numerous, of which Pope selected those which he thought best, and published them in one volume 8vo, 1721. A posthumous volume was printed at Dublin, in 1758. Both these volumes united, with several additional poems, collected by Nichols, were printed in the collection of the "English Poets," 1779, and 1790. "Such, (says Goldsmith) is the very unpoetical detail of the life of a poet. Some dates, and a few facts, scarcely more interesting than those which make the ornament of a country tombstone, are all that remain of one whose labours now begin to excite curiosity. A poet, while living, is

seldom an object sufficently great to attract much attention; his real merits are known but to a few, and these are generally sparing in their praises. When his fame is increased by time, it is then too late to investigate the peculiarities of his disposition; the dews of the morning are past; and we vainly try to continue the chase by the meridian splendour."

Parnell was a man of very great benevolence, and of very agreeable manners. His conversation is said to have been extremely pleasing, but in what it's peculiar excellence consisted, cannot now be determined. His connections were extensive, and his friends numerous and respectable. He was intimately acquainted with Addison, Steele, and Congreve, and with Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot. Joined by kindred talents, and qualities, he loved, esteemed, and revered his friends; and was by them loved, esteemed, revered. He was also respected by the world as a man of superior endowments. To talents, learning, and virtue, were joined an ample estate, and considerable preferments in the church. Tho' not an economist, he was by no means so profuse as to have materially reduced his fortune. Goldsmith says, " he was the most capable man in the world to make the happiness of those he conversed with, and the least able to secure his own. He wanted that evenness of disposition, which bears disappointment without phlegm, and joy with indifference. He was ever very much elated or depressed, and his life passed in agony or rapture. But the turbulence of these passions only affected himself, and never those about him; he knew the ridicule of his own character, and very effectually raised the mirth of his companions, as well at his vexations as at his tri-

umphs. Indeed he took care that his friends should see him to the best advantage; for when he found his fits of spleen and uneasiness, which sometimes lasted for weeks together, he betook himself, with all expedition, to the remote parts of Ireland, and there made out a gloomy kind of satisfaction, in giving hideous descriptions of the solitude to which he had retired. Scarcely a bog in his neighbourhood was left without reproach, and scarcely a mountain reared it's head unsung." "I have been once witness (says Pope, in one of his letters to him) of some, I hope of all your splenetic hours; come, and be a comforter to me in mine." In answer to one of Parnell's dreary descriptions, he says, "I can easily image to my thoughts, the solitary hours of your eremetical life among the mountains, from something parallel to it in my own retirement." And in another place, "we are both miserably enough situated, God knows; but of the two evils, I think the solitudes of the south are to be preferred to the deserts of the west." In this manner Pope answered him in the tone of his own complaints; and it is very probable this sympathy in his imagined distresses communicated a temporary relief, by throwing the blame on fortune and accident rather than on himself. But this dreary temper in Parnell, disgusted his neighbours in Ireland. They made no allowances for human wretchedness or imbecility. Parnell's propensity to company, was strangely at variance with this habit of his mind, and subjected him to many mortifications. Among his English friends he affected to despise his Irish acquaintance. The conduct of Parnell, in this particular, cannot be commended. He appears either to have lost the art

to engage; or he had not the prudence of securing more humble, and, on that account, more sincere and more permanent connections. However this may be, it is certain, that he sacrificed, for a month or two in England, a whole year of happiness in the country. What our author permitted the world to see of him, was elegant and splendid. No sooner had he collected his annual income in Ireland, than he would set out for England to enjoy the company of his favourite friends, and laugh at the more prudent part of the world, who were attending to business and gaining money. Among these he was happy; his mind was at ease; and he gave loose to every harmless folly which came uppermost.

The prose writings of Parnell are his papers in the "Spectators," and "Guardian;" *Essay on Homer; Life of Zoilus;* and *Remarks of Zoilus;* but they discover no great degree of force or comprehensiveness of mind. It may however be allowed that they teem with imagination, and shew great learning, good sense, and a knowledge of mankind.

Considered as a poet, Parnell is not distinguished for any extraordinary strength of intellect, or fertility of invention. His taste was delicate, and refined by a careful perusal of the ancient classics. His admiration of those models of fine writing, led to imitations so close, as often to preclude originality. There is little of novelty in his thoughts, his imagery, or his sentiments. But his thoughts are just; his images, tho' not great, are beautiful, well selected, and happily applied; his sentiments, tho' not bold or impassioned, are natural, and agreeable. His versification is sweet and harmonious; his language pure, proper, and correct; and the moral tendency

good. Hume said, that "Parnell's Poems were as fresh at the twentieth reading as at the first." The poem of Parnell best known, and on which his reputation is grounded, is the *Hermit*. Pope thinks the poem was written originally in Spanish, from whence it is probable Howell had translated it into prose, and inserted it in one of his "Letters." However this may be, Dr. Henry More, in his "Dialogue," has the very same story; Voltaire has introduced it also into his "Zadig;" and it has been asserted by some, that it is originally of Arabian invention. The doctrine of a particular Providence, inculcated in this piece, is doubtful. The story represents the Deity as acting a barbarous and inconsistent part; and his agent as a robber and a murderer. It is not probable that a rich man would abstain from a customary gratification of his vanity, after the loss of a cup which he could easily supply; neither is habitual avarice removed by unexpected acquisitions. The *Epistle to Pope* is one of the finest compliments that was ever paid to any poet. The part of it where he mentions that being far from Pope, he was far from wit and learning, gave offence to his friends at home. The description of Pope's situation is very ingeniously expressed, but very far from being true. The panegyric *on Swift* is not exceeded by it in discrimination of character, selection of imagery, and felicity of expression *The Night-Piece on Death* deserves every praise. It is indirectly preferred by Goldsmith to "Gray's Elegy," but, in Dr. Johnson's opinion, Gray has the advantage in dignity, variety, and originality of sentiment.
The *Song* of "My days have been so wondrous free," was written on the lady he afterwards married.

The *Eclogue on Health* is simple and pleasing. The *Anacreontic*, "When spring comes on with fresh delight," is taken from the French, but superior to the original. The imagery is beautiful, and the sentiments natural and pleasing. These, with the *Elegy to an Old Beauty*, and *An Imitation of some French Verses*, are all of Parnell's Poems which are truly interesting, excellent, and will bear frequent repetition, without fatigue. The remainder are trifling, abound with religious enthusiasm, the frenzy of irrational love, mythological romance, and historical improbability. They consist principally of the *Rise of Woman, Hymns, a Fairy Tale, Translations, Allegory on Man, Moses, Deborah, Hannah, David, Solomon, Jonah, Hezekiah, Habakuk.*

THE HERMIT.

Far in a wild, unknown to public view,
from youth to age a reverend Hermit grew;
the moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
his food the fruits, his drink the crystal well;
remote from man, with God he pass'd his days,
prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise.

A life so sacred, such serene repose,
seem'd heaven itself, till one suggestion rose,
that vice should triumph, virtue vice obey;
this sprung some doubt of Providence's sway:
his hopes no more a certain prospect boast,
and all the tenor of his soul is lost.
So when a smooth expanse receives impress
calm nature's image on it's wat'ry breast,
down bend the banks, the trees depending grow,
and skies beneath with answering colours glow;
but if a stone the gentle sea divide,
swift ruffling circles curl on every side,
and glimm'ring fragments of a broken sun,
banks, trees, and skies, in thick disorder run.

To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
to find if books or swains report it right
(for yet by swains alone the world he knew,
whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew),
he quits his cell; the pilgrim-staff he bore,
and fix'd the scallop in his hat before;
then with the sun a rising journey went,
sedate to think, and watching each event.

The morn was wasted in the pathless grass,
and long and lonesome was the wild to pass;

but when the southern sun had warm'd the day,
a youth came posting o'er a crossing way;
his raiment decent, his complexion fair,
and soft in graceful ringlets wav'd his hair:
then near approaching, 'Father, hail!' he cried;
and 'Hail, my son!' the reverend sire replied;
words follow'd words, from question answer flow'd,
and talk of various kind deceiv'd the road;
till each with other pleas'd, and loath to part,
while in their age they differ, join in heart.
Thus stands an aged elm in ivy bound,
thus youthful ivy clasps an elm around.

Now sunk the sun; the closing hour of day
come onward, mantled o'er with sober gray;
nature in silence bade the world repose:
when near the road a stately palace rose.
There by the moon through ranks of trees they pass,
whose verdure crown'd their sloping sides of grass.
It chanc'd the noble master of the dome
still made his house the wand'ring stranger's home;
yet still the kindness, from a thirst of praise,
prov'd the vain flourish of expensive ease.
The pair arrive: the liveried servants wait;
their lord receives them at the pompous gate.
The table groans with costly piles of food,
and all is more than hospitably good.
Then, led to rest, the day's long toil they drown,
deep sunk in sleep, and silk, and heaps of down.

At length 't is morn, and at the dawn of day
along the wide canals the zephyrs play;
fresh o'er the gay parterres the breezes creep,
and shake the neighbouring wood to banish sleep.
Up rise the guests obedient to the call;
an early banquet deck'd the splendid hall;

rich luscious wine a golden goblet grac'd,
which the kind master forc'd the guests to taste.
Then pleas'd and thankful from the porch they go;
and, but the landlord, none had cause of woe:
his cup was vanish'd; for in secret guise
the younger guest purloin'd the glitt'ring prize.

As one who spies a serpent in his way,
glist'ning and basking in the summer ray,
disorder'd stops to shun the danger near,
then walks with faintness on, and looks with fear;
so seem'd the sire, when, far upon the road,
the shining spoil his wily partner shew'd.
He stopp'd with silence, walk'd with trembling heart,
and much he wish'd, but durst not ask, to part:
murm'ring he lifts his eyes, and thinks it hard
that gen'rous actions meet a base reward.

While thus they pass, the sun his glory shrouds,
the changing skies hang out their sable clouds;
a sound in air presag'd approaching rain,
and beasts to covert scud across the plain.
Warn'd by these signs, the wand'ring pair retreat
to seek for shelter at a neighb'ring seat:
't was built with turrets on a rising ground,
and strong, and large, and unimprov'd around;
it's owner's temper, tim'rous and severe,
unkind and griping, caus'd a desert there.
As near the Miser's heavy doors they drew,
fierce rising gusts with sudden fury blew;
the nimble lightning, mix'd with showers, began,
and o'er their heads loud rolling thunders ran.
Here long they knock, but knock or call in vain,
driven by the wind, and batter'd by the rain.
At length some pity warm'd the master's breast
('t was then his threshold first receiv'd a guest):

slow creaking turns the door, with jealous care,
and half he welcomes in the shiv'ring pair;
one frugal faggot lights the naked walls,
and nature's fervour through their limbs recalls:
bread of the coarsest sort, with meagre wine,
(each hardly granted) serv'd them both to dine;
and when the tempest first appear'd to cease,
a ready warning bid them part in peace.

With still remark the pond'ring Hermit view'd,
in one so rich, a life so poor and rude;
and why should such (within himself he cried)
lock the lost wealth a thousand want beside?
but what new marks of wonder soon took place
in every settling feature of his face,
when from his vest the young companion bore
that cup the gen'rous landlord own'd before,
and paid profusely with the precious bowl
the stinted kindness of this churlish soul!

But now the clouds in airy tumult fly,
the sun emerging opes an azure sky;
a fresher green the smelling leaves display,
and, glitt'ring as they tremble, cheer the day:
the weather courts them from the poor retreat,
and the glad master bolts the wary gate.

While hence they walk, the pilgrim's bosom wrought
with all the travel of uncertain thought;
his partner's acts without their cause appear,
'twas there a vice, and seem'd a madness here:
detesting that, and pitying this, he goes,
lost and confounded with the various shows.

Now night's dim shades again involve the sky;
again the wand'rers want a place to lie;
again they search, and find a lodging nigh:
the soil improv'd around, the mansion neat,

and neither poorly low nor idly great;
it seem'd to speak it's master's turn of mind
content, and not to praise, but virtue, kind.
Hither the walkers turn, with weary feet,
then bless the mansion, and the master greet:
their greeting fair, bestow'd with modest guise,
the courteous master hears, and thus replies:
'Without a vain, without a grudging heart,
to him who gives us all I yield a part;
from him you come, for him accept it here,
a frank and sober, more than costly, cheer.'
He spoke, and bade the welcome table spread,
then talk'd of virtue till the time of bed;
when the grave household round his hall repair
warn'd by a bell, and close the hours with prayer.
At length the world, renew'd by calm repose,
was strong for toil, the dappled morn arose;
before the pilgrims part, the younger crept
near the clos'd cradle, where an infant slept,
and writh'd his neck: the landlord's little pride,
O strange return! grew black, and gasp'd, and died.
Horror of horrors! what! his only son?
how look'd our Hermit when the fact was done?
not hell, tho' hell's black jaws in sunder part,
and breathe blue fire, could more assault his heart.
Confus'd and struck with silence at the deed,
he flies, but, trembling, fails to fly with speed.
His steps the youth pursues; the country lay
perplex'd with roads; a servant shew'd the way;
a river cross'd the path; the passage o'er
was nice to find, the servant trod before;
long arms of oaks an open bridge supplied,
and deep the waves beneath the bending glide.
The youth, who seem'd to watch a time to sin,

approach'd the careless guide, and thrust him in;
plunging he falls, and, rising, lifts his head,
then flashing turns, and sinks among the dead!

Wild sparkling rage inflames the father's eyes,
he bursts the bands of fear, and madly cries,
'Detested wretch!'—But scarce his speech began,
when the strange partner seem'd no longer man:
his youthful face grew more serenely sweet;
his robe turn'd white and flow'd upon his feet;
fair rounds of radiant points invest his hair:
celestial odours breathe through purpled air;
and wings, whose colours glitter'd on the day,
wide at his back their gradual plumes display.
The form ethereal bursts upon his sight,
and moves in all the majesty of light.

Tho' loud at first the pilgrim's passion grew,
sudden he gaz'd, and wist not what to do;
surprise in secret chains his words suspends,
and in a calm his settling temper ends.
But silence here the beauteous angel broke
(the voice of music ravish'd as he spoke).

'Thy prayer, thy praise, thy life to vice unknown
in sweet memorial rise before the throne:
these charms success in our bright region find,
and force an angel down to calm thy mind;
for this commission'd, I forsook the sky;
nay, cease to kneel—thy fellow-servant I.

Then know the truth of government divine,
and let these scruples be no longer thine.

The Maker justly claims that world he made,
in this the right of Providence is laid;
it's sacred majesty through all depends
on using second means to work his ends:
'tis thus, withdrawn in state from human eye,

the Power exerts his attributes on high,
your actions uses, nor controuls your will,
and bids the doubting sons of men be still.
What strange events can strike with more surprise,
than those which lately struck thy wond'ring eyes?
yet, taught by these, confess th' Almighty just,
and where you cann't unriddle learn to trust.
The great, vain man, who far'd on costly food,
whose life was too luxurious to be good,
who made his iv'ry stands with goblets shine,
and forc'd his guests to morning draughts of wine,
has, with the cup the graceless custom lost,
and still he welcomes, but with less of cost.
The mean suspicious wretch, whose bolted door
ne'er mov'd in pity to the wand'ring poor,
with him I left the cup, to teach his mind
that Heaven can bless, if mortals will be kind.
Conscious of wanting worth, he views the bowl,
and feels compassion touch his grateful soul.
Thus artists melt the sullen ore of lead,
with heaping coals of fire upon it's head;
in the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
and, loose from dross, the silver runs below.
Long had our pious friend in virtue trod,
but now the child half wean'd his heart from God:
(child of his age) for him he liv'd in pain,
and measur'd back his steps to earth again.
To what excesses had his dotage run!
but God, to save the father, took the son.
To all but thee in fits he seem'd to go;
and 't was my ministry to deal the blow.
The poor fond parent, humbled in the dust,
now owns in tears the punishment was just.
But how had all his fortunes felt a wrack,

had that false servant sped in safety back:
this night his treasur'd heaps he meant to steal,
and what a fund of charity would fail!
Thus Heaven instructs thy mind: this trial o'er,
depart in peace, resign, and sin no more.'
On sounding pinions here the youth withdrew,
the sage stood wond'ring as the seraph flew.
Thus look'd Elisha, when to mount on high
his master took the chariot of the sky:
the fiery pomp ascending left to view;
the prophet gaz'd and wish'd to follow too.
The bending Hermit here a prayer begun:
Lord! as in heaven, on earth thy will be done!
Then, gladly turning, sought his ancient place,
and pass'd a life of piety and peace.

EPISTLE TO MR. POPE.

To praise, yet still with due respect to praise,
a bard triumphant in immortal bays;
the learn'd to show, the sensible commend,
yet still preserve the province of the friend:
what life, what vigour, must the lines require?
what music tune them? what affection fire?

O might thy genius in my bosom shine!
thou shouldst not fail of numbers worthy thine;
the brightest ancients might at once agree
to sing within my lays, and sing of thee.

Horace himself would own thou dost excel
in candid arts to play the critic well;
Ovid himself might wish to sing the dame
whom Windsor-Forest sees a gliding stream;
on silver feet, with annual osier crown'd,
she runs for ever through poetic ground.

How flame the glories of Belinda's hair!
made by thy Muse the envy of the fair;
less shone the tresses Egypt's princess wore,
which sweet Callimachus so sung before.
Here courtly trifles set the world at odds,
belles war with beaux, and whims descend for gods.
The new machines, in names of ridicule,
mock the grave frenzy of the chemic fool:
but know, ye fair! a point conceal'd with art,
the sylphs and gnomes are but a woman's heart:
the graces stand in sight; a satyr train
peep o'er their heads, and laugh behind the scene.

In Fame's fair temple, o'er the boldest wits,
enshrin'd on high the sacred Virgil sits,

and sits in measures, such as Virgil's muse,
to place thee near him might be fond to chuse:
how might he tune th' alternare reed with thee,
perhaps a Strephon thou, a Daphnis he,
while some old Damon, o'er the vulgar wise,
thinks he deserves, and thou deserv'st the prize?
Rapt with the thought, my fancy seeks the plains,
and turns me shepherd while I hear the strains.
Indulgent nurse of every tender gale,
parent of flow'rets, old Arcadia! hail:
here in the cool my limbs at ease I spread,
here let thy poplars whisper o'er my head;
still slide thy waters soft among the trees,
thy aspins quiver in a breathing breeze;
smile all thy vallies in eternal spring;
be hush'd ye winds! while Pope and Virgil sing.

In English lays, and all sublimely great,
thy Homer warms with all his ancient heat;
he shines in council, thunders in the fight,
and flames with every sense of great delight.
Long has that poet reign'd, and long unknown
like monarchs sparkling on a distant throne;
in all the majesty of Greece retir'd,
himself unknown, his mighty name admir'd;
his language failing, wrapp'd him round with night,
thine, rais'd by thee, recalls the work to light.
So wealthy mines, that ages long before
fed the large realms around with golden ore,
when chok'd by sinking banks, no more appear,
and shepherds only say, 'The mines were here;'
should some rich youth (if nature warm his heart,
and all his projects stand inform'd with art)
here clear the caves, there ope the leading vein,
the mines detected flame with gold again.

How vast, how copious, are thy new designs!
how every music varies in thy lines!
still as I read I feel my bosom beat,
and rise in raptures by another's heat.
Thus in the wood, when summer dress'd the days,
when Windsor lent us tuneful hours of ease,
our ears the lark, the thrush, the turtle, blest,
and Philomela sweetest o'er the rest;
the shades resound with song—O softly tread!
while a whole season warbles round my head.

This to my friend; and when a friend inspires,
my silent harp it's master's hand requires,
shakes off the dust, and makes these rocks resound,
for Fortune plac'd me in unfertile ground,
far from the joys that with my soul agree,
from wit, from learning—far, oh far! from thee!
Here moss-grown trees expand the smallest leaf,
here half an acre's corn is half a sheaf;
here hills with naked heads the tempest meet,
rocks at their side, and torrents at their feet,
or lazy lakes, unconscious of a flood,
whose dull brown naiads ever sleep in mud.

Yet here Content can dwell, and learned Ease,
a friend delight me, and an author please;
e'en here I sing, while Pope supplies the theme,
shew my own love, tho' not increase his fame.

EPISTLE TO DR. SWIFT,

on his birth-day, Nov. 30, 1713.

Urg'd by the warmth of friendship's sacred flame,
but more by all the glories of thy fame;
by all those offsprings of thy learned mind,
in judgment solid, as in wit refin'd,
resolv'd I sing, Tho' labouring up the way
to reach my theme, O Swift, accept my lay.

Rapt by the force of thought, and rais'd above,
through Contemplation's airy fields I rove;
where powerful Fancy purifies my eye,
and lights the beauties of a brighter sky;
fresh paints the meadows, bids green shades ascend,
clear rivers wind, and opening plains extend;
then fill it's landscape through the varied parts
with Virtues, Graces, Sciences, and Arts:
superior forms, of more than mortal air,
more large than mortals, more serenely fair.
Of these two chiefs, the guardians of thy name,
conspire to raise thee to the point of fame.
Ye future Times, I heard the silver sound!
I saw the Graces form a circle round!
each, where she fix'd, attentive seem'd to root,
and all but Eloquence herself, was mute.

High o'er the rest I see the Goddess rise,
loose to the breeze her upper garment flies:
by turns, within her eyes the Passions burn,
and softer passions languish in their turn:
upon her tongue Persuasion or Command,
and decent Action dwells upon her hand.

From out her breast ('t was there the treasure lay)
she drew thy labours to the blaze of day;

then gaz'd, and read the charms she could inspire,
and taught the listening audience to admire,
how strong thy flight, how large thy grasp of thought,
how just thy schemes, how regularly wrought;
how sure you wound when Ironies deride,
which must be seen, and feign to turn aside.
'T was thus exploring she rejoic'd to see
her brightest features drawn so near by thee:
'Then here,' she cries, 'let future ages dwell,
and learn to copy where they cann't excel.'
She spake. Applause attended on the close:
then Poësy, her sister art, arose;
her fairer sister, born in deeper ease,
not made so much for business, more to please.
Upon her cheek sits Beauty, ever young;
the soul of Music warbles on her tongue:
bright in her eyes a pleasing ardour glows,
and from her heart the sweetest temper flows;
a laurel-wreath adorns her curls of hair,
and binds their order to the dancing air:
she shakes the colours of her radiant wing,
and, from the spheres she takes a pitch to sing.
Thrice happy genius his, whose works have hit
the lucky point of business and of wit.
They seem like showers, which April months prepare
to call their flowery glories up to air:
the drops, descending, take the painted bow,
and dress with sunshine, while for good they flow.
To me retiring oft, he finds relief
in slowly wasting care and biting grief:
from me retreating oft, he gives to view
what eases care and grief in others too.
Ye fondly grave, be wise enough to know,
"Life, ne'er unbent, were but a life of woe."

Some, full in stretch for greatness, some for gain,
on his own rack each puts himself to pain.
I 'll gently steal you from your toils away,
where balmy winds with scents ambrosial play;
where, on the banks as crystal rivers flow,
they teach immortal amaranths to grow:
then, from the mild indulgence of the scene,
restore your tempers strong for toils again.

She ceas'd. Soft music trembled in the wind,
and sweet delight diffus'd through every mind:
the little Smiles, which still the Goddess grace,
sportive arose, and ran from face to face.
But chief (and in that place the Virtues bless)
a gentle band their eager joys express:
here, Friendship asks, and Love of Merit longs
to hear the Goddesses renew their songs;
here great Benevolence to Man is pleas'd;
these own their Swift, and grateful hear him prais'd.
You gentle band, you well may bear your part,
you reign Superior Graces in his heart.

O Swift! if fame be life (as well we know
that bards and heroes have esteem'd it so),
thou canst not wholly die. Thy works will shine
to future times, and life in fame be thine.

A HYMN TO CONTENTMENT.

Lovely, lasting peace of mind!
sweet delight of human kind!
heavenly born, and bred on high,
to crown the fav'rites of the sky
with more of happiness below
than victors in a triumph know!
Whither, O whither art thou fled,
to lay thy meek contented head!
what happy region dost thou please
to make the seat of calm and ease?
Ambition searches all it's sphere
of pomp and state to meet thee there.
Increasing Avarice would find
thy presence in it's gold enshrin'd.
The bold advent'rer ploughs his way
through rocks, amidst the foaming sea,
to gain thy love, and then perceives,
thou wert not in the rocks and waves.
The silent heart, which grief assails,
treads soft and lonesome o'er the vales,
sees daisies open, rivers run,
and seeks (as I have vainly done)
amusing thought, but learns to know
that solitude's the nurse of woe.
No real happiness is found
in trailing purple o'er the ground;
or in a soul exalted high,
to range the circuit of the sky;
converse with stars above, and know
all nature in it's forms below;
the rest it seeks in seeking dies,

and doubts at last for knowledge rise.
Lovely, lasting Peace! appear;
this world itself, if thou art here,
is once again with Eden blest,
and man contains it in his breast.
'T was thus, as under shade I stood,
I sung my wishes to the wood,
and, lost in thought, no more perceiv'd
the branches whisper as they wav'd;
it seem'd as all the quiet place
confess'd the presence of the Grace:
when thus she spoke: "Go rule thy will,
bid thy wild passions all be still;
know God, and bring thy heart to know
the joys which from religion flow;
then every grace shall prove it's guest,
and I 'll be there to crown the rest."
Oh! by yonder mossy seat,
in my hours of sweet retreat,
might I thus my soul employ
with sense of gratitude and joy;
rais'd, as ancient prophets were,
in heavenly vision, praise, and prayer;
pleasing all men, hurting none,
pleas'd and bless'd with God alone;
then while the gardens take my sight
with all the colours of delight,
while silver waters glide along,
to please my ear and court my song,
I 'll lift my voice and tune my string,
and thee, great Source of Nature! sing.
The sun that walks his airy way
to light the world and give the day;
the moon that shines with borrow'd light,

the stars that gild the gloomy night,
the seas that roll unnumber'd waves,
the wood that spreads it's shady leaves,
the field whose ears conceal the grain,
the yellow treasure of the plain;
all of these, and all I see,
should be sung, and sung by me;
they speak their Maker as they can,
but want and ask the tongue of man.
Go search among your idle dreams,
your busy or your vain extremes,
and find a life of equal bliss,
or own the next begun in this.

AN ELEGY TO AN OLD BEAUTY.

In vain, poor nymph! to please our youthful sight,
you sleep in cream and frontlets all the night,
your face with patches soil, with paint repair,
dress with gay gowns, and shade with foreign hair:
if truth, in spite of manners, must be told,
why, really, fifty-five is something old.
Once you were young, or one, whose life 's so long
she might have borne my mother, tells me wrong:
and once (since Envy's dead before you die)
the women own you play'd a sparkling eye,
taught the light foot a modish little trip,
and pouted with the prettiest purple lip.
To some new charmer are the roses fled
which blew, to damask all thy cheek with red;
youth calls the graces there to fix their reign,
and airs by thousands fill their easy train.
So parting Summer bids her flowery prime

attend the sun to dress some foreign clime,
while with'ring seasons in succession, here,
strip the gay gardens and deform the year.

But thou (since Nature bids) the world resign,
't is now thy daughter's daughter's time to shine;
with more address (or such as pleases more),
she runs her female exercises o'er,
unfurls or closes, raps or turns the fan,
and smiles, or blushes, at the creature man:
with quicker life, as gilded coaches pass,
in sideling courtesy she drops the glass:
with better strength, on visit-days she bears,
to mount her fifty flights of ample stairs.
Her mein, her shape, her temper, eyes, and tongue,
are sure to conquer—for the rogue is young;
and all that 's madly wild, or oddly gay,
we call it only pretty Fanny's way.

Let time, that makes you homely, make you sage;
the sphere of wisdom is the sphere of age.
'T is true, when beauty dawns with early fire,
and hears the flatt'ring tongues of soft desire,
if not from virtue, from it's gravest ways
the soul with pleasing avocation strays;
but beauty gone, 't is easier to be wise,
as harpers better by the loss of eyes.

Henceforth retire, reduce your roving airs,
haunt less the plays, and more the public prayers;
reject the Mecklin head and gold brocade,
go pray, in sober Norwich crape array'd.
Thy pendent diamonds let thy Fanny take,
(their trembling lustre shews how much you shake)
or bid her wear thy necklace row'd with pearl,
you 'll find your Fanny an obedient girl.
So for the rest, with less incumbrance hung,

you walk through life unmingled with the young,
and view the shade and substance as you pass,
with joint endeavour trifling at the glass,
or Folly dress'd, and rambling all her days,
to meet her counterpart, and grow by praise;
yet still sedate yourself, and gravely plain,
you neither fret nor envy at the vain.

'T was thus (if man with woman we compare)
the wise Athenian cross'd a glittering fair;
unmov'd by tongues and sights he walk'd the place,
through tape, toys, tinsel, gimp, perfume, and lace;
then bends from Mars's hill his awful eyes,
and "what a world I never want!" he cries;
but cries unheard; for folly will be free;
so parts the buzzing gaudy crowd and he:
as careless he for them, as they for him;
he wrapt in wisdom, and they whirl'd by whim.

A NIGHT-PIECE ON DEATH.

By the blue taper's trembling light
no more I waste the wakeful night,
intent with endless view to pore
the schoolmen and the sages o'er;
their books from wisdom widely stray,
or point at best the longest way:
I'll seek a readier path and go
where wisdom's surely taught below.

How deep yon' azure dyes the sky!
where orbs of gold unnumber'd lie,
while through their ranks in silver pride,
the nether crescent seems to glide.
The slumb'ring breeze forgets to breathe,

the lake is smooth and clear beneath;
where once again the spangled show
descends to meet our eyes below,
the grounds which on the right aspire,
in dimness from the view retire;
the left presents a place of graves,
whose wall the silent water laves.
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight
among the livid gleams of night;
there pass with melancholy state,
by all the solemn heaps of fate,
and think, as softly sad you tread
above the venerable dead,
'Time was like thee they life possest,
and time shall be that thou shalt rest.'

Those graves, with bending osier bound,
that nameless heave the crumbled ground,
quick to the glancing thought disclose
where Toil and Poverty repose.

The flat smooth stones that bear a name,
the chissel's slender help to fame
(which ere our set of friends decay
their frequent steps may wear away),
a middle race of mortals own,
men half ambitious, all unknown.

The marble tombs that rise on high,
whose dead in valuted arches lie,
whose pillars swell with sculptur'd stones,
arms, angels, epitaphs, and bones,
these (all the poor remains of state)
adorn the rich, or praise the great,
who while on earth in fame they live,
are senseless of the fame they give.

Ha! while I gaze pale Cynthia fades,

the bursting earth unveils the shades!
all slow and wan, and wrapp'd with shrouds,
they rise in visionary crowds,
and all with sober accent cry,
'Think, mortal! what it is to die.'

Now from yon black and fun'ral yew,
that bathes the charnel-house with dew,
methinks I hear a voice begin
(ye ravens! cease your croaking din;
ye tolling clocks! no time resound
o'er the long lake and midnight ground);
it sends a peal of hollow groans,
thus speaking from among the bones.

'When men my scythe and darts supply,
how great a king of fears am I!
they view me like the last of things;
they make, and then they dread, my stings.
Fools! if you less provok'd your fears,
no more my spectre form appears.
Death's but a path that must be trod,
if man would ever pass to God;
a port of calms, a state of ease
from the rough rage of swelling seas.'

Why then thy flowing sable stoles,
deep pendent cypress, mourning poles,
loose scarfs to fall athwart thy weeds,
long palls, drawn hearses, cover'd steeds,
and plumes of black, that, as they tread,
nod o'er the 'scutcheons of the dead?

Nor can the parted body know,
nor wants the soul these forms of woe.
As men who long in prison dwell,
with lamps that glimmer round the cell,
whene'er their suff'ring years are run,

spring forth to greet the glitt'ring sun;
such joy, tho' far transcending sense,
have pious souls at parting hence.
On earth, and in the body plac'd,
a few and evil years they waste;
but when their chains are cast aside,
see the bright scene unfolding wide;
clap the glad wing, and tower away,
and mingle with the blaze of day.

AN IMITATION OF SOME FRENCH VERSES.

Relentless time! destroying power,
whom stone and brass obey,
who giv'st to every flying hour
to work some new decay;

unheard, unheeded, and unseen,
thy secret saps prevail,
and ruin man, a nice machine,
by nature form'd to fail.

My change arrives; the change I meet,
before I thought it nigh.
My spring, my years of pleasure fleet,
and all their beauties die.

In age I search, and only find
a poor unfruitful gain,
grave wisdom stalking slow behind,
oppress'd with loads of pain.

My ignorance could once beguile,
and fancy'd joys inspire;
my errors cherish'd hope to smile
on newly born desire.

But now experience shews, the bliss
for which I fondly sought,
not worth the long impatient wish,
and ardour of the thought.

My youth met fortune fair array'd,
in all her pomp she shone,
and might perhaps have well essay'd
to make her gifts my own:

but when I saw the blessings shower
on some unworthy mind,
I left the chace, and own'd the power
was justly painted blind.

I pass'd the glories which adorn
the splendid courts of kings,
and while the persons mov'd my scorn,
I rose to scorn the things.

My manhood felt a vigorous fire
by love encreas'd the more;
but years with coming years conspire
to break the chains I wore.

In weakness safe, the sex I see
with idle lustre shine;
for what are all their joys to me,
which cannot now be mine?

But hold—I feel my gout decrease,
my troubles laid to rest,
and truths which would disturb my peace
are painful truths at best.

Vainly the time I have to roll
in sad reflection flies;
ye fondling passions of my soul!
ye sweet deceits! arise.

I wisely change the scene within,
to things that us'd to please;
in pain, philosophy is spleen,
in health, 't is only ease.

LOVE AND INNOCENCE,
a song.

My days have been so wond'rous free,
the little birds that fly
with careless ease, from tree to tree,
were but as bless'd as I.

Ask gliding waters if a tear
of mine increas'd their stream;
or ask the flying gales if e'er
I lent one sigh to them;

but now my former days retire,
and I 'm by beauty caught;
the tender chains of sweet desire
are fix'd upon my thought.

Ye nightingales! ye twisting pines!
ye swains, that haunt the grove!
ye gentle echoes! breezy winds!
ye close retreats of love!

with all of nature, all of art,
assist the dear design;
O teach a young unpractis'd heart
to make fair Nancy mine!

The very thought of change I hate
as much as of despair,
nor ever covet to be great,
unless it be for her.

'T is true the passion in my mind
is mix'd with soft distress,
yet while the fair I love is kind,
I cannot wish it less.

SONG.

Thyrsis, a young and am'rous swain,
saw two, the beauties of the plain,
who both his heart subdue;
gay Cælia's eyes were dazzling fair,
Sabina's easy shape and air,
with softer magic drew.

He haunts the stream, he haunts the grove,
lives in a fond romance of love,
and seems for each to die;
till each a little spiteful grown,
Sabina Cælia's shape ran down,
and she Sabina's eye.

Their envy made the shepherd find
those eyes which Love could only blind;
so set the lover free:
no more he haunts the grove or stream,
or with a true-love knot and name
engraves a wounded tree.

'Ah, Cælia! (sly Sabina cry'd)
tho' neither love, we're both deny'd;
now to support the sex's pride,
let either fix the dart.'
'Poor girl! (says Cælia) say no more,
for should the swain but one adore,
that spite which broke his chains before
would break the other's heart.

HEALTH.

An Eclogue.

Now early shepherds o'er the meadow pass,
and print long footsteps in the glitt'ring grass;
the cows neglectful of their pasture stand,
by turns obsequious to their milker's hand.

When Damon softly trod the shaven lawn,
Damon, a youth from city cares withdrawn;
long was the pleasing walk he wander'd through,
a cover'd arbour clos'd the distant view;
there rests the youth, and while the feather'd throng
raise their wild music thus contrives a song.

Here wafted o'er by mild Etesian air,
thou, country goddess, beauteous Health! repair;
here let my breast through quiv'ring trees inhale
thy rosy blessings with the morning gale.
What are the fields, or flowers, or all I see?
ah! tasteless all, if not enjoy'd with thee.

Joy to my soul! I feel the goddess nigh,
the face of nature cheers as well as I;
o'er the flat green refreshing breezes run,
the smiling daisies blow beneath the sun,
the brooks run purling down with silver waves,
the planted lanes rejoice with dancing leaves,
the chirping birds from all the compass rove,
to tempt the tuneful echoes of the grove;
high sunny summits, deeply shaded dales,
thick mossy banks, and flowery winding vales,
with various prospect gratify the sight,
and scatter fix'd attention in delight.

Oh come, thou goddess of my rural song!
and bring thy daughter, calm Content, along,

dame of the ruddy cheek and laughing eye,
from whose bright presence clouds of sorrow fly:
for her I mow my walks, I plat my bowers,
clip low my hedges, and support my flowers;
to welcome her this summer seat I drest,
and here I court her when she comes to rest;
when she from exercise to learned ease
shall change again, and teach the change to please.
Now friends conversing my soft hours refine,
and Tully's Tusculum revives in mine:
now to grave books I bid the mind retreat,
and such as make me rather good than great;
or o'er the works of easy Fancy rove,
where flutes and innocence amuse the grove:
the native bard that on Sicilian plains
first sung the lowly manners of the swains,
or Maro's muse, that in the fairest light
paints rural prospects and the charms of sight;
these soft amusements bring content along,
and fancy, void of sorrow, turns to song.
Here, beauteous Health! for all the year remain,
when the next comes, I'll charm thee thus again.

ANACREONTIC.

When spring came on with fresh delight,
to cheer the soul, and charm the sight,
while easy breezes, softer rain,
and warmer suns salute the plain,
't was then in yonder piny grove,
that Nature went to meet with Love.

Green was her robe, and green her wreath,
where'er she trod 't was green beneath;
where'er she turn'd the pulses beat
with new recruits of genial heat;
and in her train the birds appear,
to match for all the coming year.

Rais'd on a bank where daisies grew,
and violets intermix'd a blue,
she finds the boy she went to find;
a thousand Pleasures wait behind;
aside a thousand arrows lie,
but all unfeather'd wait to fly.

When they met, the dame and boy,
dancing Graces, idle Joy,
wanton Smiles, and airy Play,
conspir'd to make the scene be gay;
Love pair'd the birds through all the grove,
and Nature bid them sing to Love;
sitting, hopping, flutt'ring, sing,

and pay their tribute from the wing,
to fledge the shafts that idly lie,
and yet unfeather'd wait to fly.
'T is thus when spring renews the blood,
they meet in every trembling wood,
and thrice they make the plumes agree,
and every dart they mount with three,
and every dart can boast a kind,
which suits each proper turn of mind.
From the tow'ring eagle's plume
the gen'rous hearts accept their doom;
shot by the peacock's painted eye,
the vain and airy lovers die:
for careful dames and frugal men
the shafts are speckled by the hen.
The pyes and parrots deck the darts,
when prattling wins the panting hearts,
when from the voice the passions spring,
the warbling finch affords a wing:
together by the sparrow stung,
down fall the wanton and the young;
and fledg'd by geese the weapons fly,
when others love—they know not why.
All this (as late I chanc'd to rove)
I learn'd in yonder waving grove.
'And see,' says Love (who call'd me near),
'how much I deal with Nature here,
how both support a proper part,
she gives the feather, I the dart:
then cease for souls averse to sigh,
if Nature cross ye, so do I;
my weapon there unfeather'd flies,
and shakes and shuffles through the skies:

but, if the mutual charms I find
by which she links you, mind to mind,
they wing my shafts, I poize the darts,
and strike from both through both your hearts.'

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POEMS

by MATTHEW PRIOR ESQR

Containing

Henry & Emma, Epistles &c.&c.

with the Authors Life

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THE LIFE OF PRIOR.

Matthew Prior was born July 21, 1664, of parents whose rank has not been determined; some say at Winborn in Dorsetshire, others, that he was son of George Prior, joiner, and citizen of London. In the register of St. John's College, Cambridge, he is called, at his admission by the president, Matthew Prior, of Winburne in Middlesex; by himself, next day, Matthew Prior of Dorsetshire; in which county, not in Middlesex, Winborn, or Wimborne, is found. When he stood candidate for his fellowship, five years afterwards, he was registered again by himself as of Middlesex. It is observable, that, as a native of Winborn, he is styled, *Filius Georgii Prior, generosi;* not consistently with the common account of the meanness of his birth. His father dying when he was very young, is supposed to have left him to the care of an uncle, Mr. Samuel Prior, a vintner, near Charing-cross; who discharged the trust reposed in him with paternal tenderness. He placed him for some time at Westminster school, under Dr. Busby; but not intending to give him any education beyond that of the school, took him, when he was well advanced in classical learning, to his own house (the Rummer Tavern), where the Earl of Dorset found him by chance, as Burnet relates, reading Horace, and was so well pleased with his proficiency, that he undertook the care and expense of his academical education. He was admitted of St. John's College, Cambridge, April 2, 1683; and on

the 3d of that month was appointed a scholar of the house, on the Dutchess of Somerset's foundation, by her own nomination. In 1686, he was admitted to his bachelor's degree; and two years afterwards, wrote an *Ode* on Exodus iii, 14. "I am that I am," as a college exercise, to be presented agreeably to the established practice of St. John's College, to the Earl of Exeter, in acknowledgment of a benefaction enjoyed by them from the bounty of his ancestor. This *Ode*, tho' nothing is said of it's success, seems to have recommended him to the notice of the Earl of Exeter. Having been invited to London by his patron, the Earl of Dorset, he obtained such notice, that in 1691 he was made secretary to the Earl of Berkely, ambassador and plenepotentiary from King William at the Hague.

In this splendid initiation into public business, his conduct was so pleasing to the King, that he made him one of the Gentlemen of his Bed-chamber; and he is supposed to have passed some of the next years in the quiet cultivation of literature and poetry.

On the death of Queen Mary, in 1695, when an emulation of elegy was universal, he brought his encomiastic tribute of tuneful sorrow, among the rest, in a long *Ode, presented to the King on his Majesty's arrival in Holland.* In 1697, he was appointed Secretary to the Earls of Pembroke and Jersey, and Sir Joseph Williamson, Plenipotentiaries at the treaty of Ryswick. When the treaty was concluded, he received a present of 100 guineas from the Lords Justices, for the trouble of bringing it over to England. The same year he was made Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. In 1698, he was appointed Secretary to the Earl of Portland,

Ambassador at the Court of France, where he is said to have been considered with great distinction.

As he was one day surveying the apartments at Versailles, being shewn the victories of Louis XIV, painted by Le Brun, and asked, whether the King of England's palace had any such decorations: "The monuments of my master's actions," said he, "are to be seen every where but in his own house."

In 1699, he went to the King at Loo, from whom, after a long audience, he carried orders to England; and, on his arrival, was made Under Secretary in the office of the Earl of Jersey; a place which he did not retain long, having been ordered back to Paris, to assist the Ambassador in the business of the partition-treaty. In 1700, he was created Master of Arts, by Mandamus, and appointed one of the Commissioners of Trade. In the parliament which met in 1701, he was chosen representative of East-Grinstead. His election was followed by a change of his party; for he joined the Tories in voting for the impeachment of Lord Somers, and the other Lords charged with advising the partition-treaty, in which he himself had been ministerially employed. By abandoning the Whigs, with whom he had hitherto avowedly acted on principle, and to whom he owed his promotion, his character and conduct were chargeable with apparent inconsistency and ingratitude, which ingenuity has laboured in vain to justify or explain. To whatever cause the notorious desertion of his party may have been owing, he stuck at nothing to serve his new friends; and, with the zeal of a convert, became a Tory, so ardent and determinate, that he did not willingly associate with men of the opposite party.

After the accession of Queen Anne, he dignified the victory of Blenheim, 1704, and the battle of Ramillies, by poetic efforts. Yet he afterwards concurred with Harley and his friends, in condemning the war as burdensome, and the conduct of the Allies as unreasonable. It is singular that Prior, who was a very high-bred man, as appears by his having made himself peculiarly agreeable to Louis XIV, by this talent, should have been recommended to Queen Anne, to be her Ambassador at the Court of France, as being *very conversant in matters of trade and commerce.* The intelligence of ministerial abuses, the avarice of generals, the tyranny of favourites, and the general danger of approaching ruin, was conveyed in a paper called "The Examiner," written by King, Swift, and other wits of the party, and sometimes by Mrs. Manley. One paper, in ridicule of Garth's verses on Godolphin, was written by Prior, and answered by Addison, in the "Whig-Examiner."

The Tories, having driven the Whigs from Court and from power, were in haste to end the war, and Prior was sent (July 1711) privately to Paris with propositions of peace; and, after returning with Mesnager, the French Plenipotentiary, was much employed in the negotiations at London; and again sent to Paris, in August 1712, to accommodate such matters as then remained unsettled in the Congress at Utrecht. From the end of August 1713, he had the appointment and rank of an Ambassador, tho' attended with some perplexities and mortifications, and continued till the Queen's death. He remained at Paris also, in the character of a public Minister, some months after the accession of George I, and then was succeeded by the Earl of Stair. He returned

to England as soon as he was enabled to discharge the debts which he had found it necessary to contract; and, on his arrival on the 25th of March 1715, was immediately taken up by an order of the House of Commons, and soon after examined by a committee of the Privy Council. On the 10th of June, Walpole moved the House for an impeachment against him, on a charge of high-treason, for holding clandestine conferences with the French Plenipotentiary; and on the 17th he was ordered into close custody, which he made less tedious by writing his *Alma, or the Progress of the Mind.* In 1717, when an act of grace was passed, he was excepted; but, at the close of the year, he was discharged.

He had now, at the age of fifty-three, his liberty; but he had nothing else; having yet no solid revenue, but from the fellowship of his college, which tho' in his exaltation he was censured for retaining, he kept to the last, saying, "The salary will always ensure me a bit of mutton and a clean shirt." Having finished his *Solomon*, he was encouraged to make a collection of his poems, and to publish them in folio by subscription. The expedient, through the industry and kindness of his friends succeeded. The price of the volume was two guineas; the entire profit amounted to four thousand; to which Lord Harley, son of the Earl of Oxford, to whom he had invariably adhered, added an equal sum for the purchase of Downhall in Essex, which Prior was to enjoy during his life, and Harley after his decease. Prior amused himself in this retreat during the latter part of his life, with a select party of friends, in any kind of nonsense which occurred. Sir James Thornhill was often of the party. Prior, however, became hypo-

chondriacal; his active mind not having any pabulum to feed upon, began to prey upon itself. He became deaf, or at least thought himself so. He was asked whether he had ever observed himself deaf when he was in office: "Faith," replied he, "I was then so afraid of my head, that I did not attend very much to my ears." Of the occurrences in his remaining life there is no account, except that he formed a design of writing a *History of his own Time;* but he had made very little progress in it, when a lingering fever carried him off, September the 18th, 1721, in the 57th year of his age. He died at Wimpole, a seat of the Earl of Oxford, near Cambridge, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, where, on a monument, for which he left five hundred pounds, is engraven this epitaph, written by Dr. Robert Friend.

Sui temporis Historiam meditantis
paulatim obrepens Febris
operi simul et vitæ filum abrupit,
Sept. 18. An. Dom. 1721, ætat. 57.
H. S. E.
Vir eximius
Serenissimis
Regi Gulielmo Reginæque Mariæ,
in Congresssione Fæderatorum
Hagæ, anno 1690 celebrata,
deinde Magnæ Britanniæ Legatis,
tum iis,
qui anno 1697, pacem Ryswicki confecerunt,
tum iis,
qui apud Gallos annis proximis legationem obierunt;
Eodem etiam, anno 1697, in Hibernia,
Secretarius;
nec non in utroque honorabili consessu
eorum,
qui anno 1700, ordinandis commercii negotiis,
quique anno 1711, diregendis Portorii rebus,
Presidebant,
Commissionarius;
Portremo

ab Anna
felicissimæ memoriæ Regina
ad Ludovicum XIV. Galliæ Regem
missus anno 1711,
de pace stabilienda,
(pace etiamnum durante
diuque ut boni jam omnes sperant duratura)
cum summa potestate Legatus.
MATHEÆUS PRIOR, Amiger;
qui
hos omnes, quibus cumulatus est, Titulos
humanitatis, ingenii, eruditionis laude
superavit:
cui enim nascenti faciles arriserant Musæ.
Hunc puerum schola hic Regia perpolivit;
Juvenem in Collegio Sti. Johannis
Cantabrigia optimis scientiis instruxit;
virum denique auxit; et perfecit
multa cum viris principibus consuetudo;
ita natus, ita insitutus,
a vatum choro avelli nunquam potuit,
sed solebat sæpe rerum civilium gravitatem
amæniorum literarum studiis condire;
et cum omne adeo poetices genus
haud infeliciter tentaret,
tum in fabellis concinne lepideque texendis
mirus artifex
neminem habuit parem.
Hæc liberalis animi oblectamenta;
quam nullo illi labore constiterent,
facile ii perspexere, quibus usus est amici,
apud quos urbanitatum et leporum plenus
cum ad rem, quæcunque forte inciderat,
apte varie copioseque alluderet,
interea nihil quæsitum, nihil vi expressum
videbatur,
sed omnia ultro effluere,
et quasi jugi e fonte affatim exuberare,
ita suos tandem dubios reliquit,
essetne in scriptis, poeta elegantior,
an in convictu, comes jucundior.

His *Poems* were reprinted, with additions, by Samuel Humphreys, esq. in 3 volumes, 8vo., 1733: and in 1740, came out *The History of his own Time*;

a performance little worthy of him, and undoubtedly little of it is his. In the library of Bulstrode there are two Essays written by Prior: one of them is on Learning, in which he mentions that Tompion, the distinguished watch-maker of his time, was put apprentice to a locksmith. The late Dutchess of Portland had five Dialogues of the Dead, in M. S. written by our poet. The character of Prior, as a statesman, belongs to general history. Of his private character, and familiar habits, very little is known. Tradition represents him as uniting the elegance and politeness of a courtier with the scholar and the man of genius; yet willing to descend from the dignity of the poet and statesman to the low delights of mean company. The Cloe, whom he celebrates, was probably sometimes ideal; but the woman with whom he cohabited was of the lowest rank.

Notwithstanding Dr. Johnson has asserted that Prior's *Henry and Emma* is a "dull and tedious dialogue, which excites neither esteem for the man, nor tenderness for the woman," it is considered by men of taste, as one of the most beautiful and interesting poems in the language. A considerable part of his Poems, consists of relations of the victories of battles and panegyric, which the lapse of time has rendered dull, uninteresting, and not desirable in this selection, which is professedly formed of pieces which will bear repeated perusals.

HENRY AND EMMA.

TO CLOE.

Thou, to whose eyes I bend, at whose command
(tho' low my voice, tho' artless be my hand)
I take the sprightly reed, and sing and play,
careless of what the cens'ring world may say;
bright Cloe! object of my constant vow,
wilt thou a while unbend thy serious brow?
Wilt thou with pleasure hear thy lover's strains,
and with one heavenly smile o'erpay his pains?
No longer shall the Nut-brown Maid be old,
tho' since her youth three hundred years have roll'd;
at thy desire she shall again be rais'd,
and her reviving charms in lasting verse be prais'd.
No longer man of woman shall complain,
that he may love and not be lov'd again;
that we in vain the fickle sex pursue,
who change the constant lover for the new.
Whatever has been writ, whatever said
of female passion feign'd, or faith decay'd,
henceforth shall in my verse refuted stand,
be said to winds, or writ upon the sand:
and while my notes to future times proclaim
unconquer'd love and ever-during flame,
O, fairest of the sex! be thou my muse;
deign on my work thy influence to diffuse:
let me partake the blessings I rehearse,
and grant me, love, the just reward of verse!
As Beauty's potent queen with every grace,
that once was Emma's has adorn'd thy face,

and as her son has to my bosom dealt
that constant flame which faithful Henry felt,
O let the story of thy life agree,
let men once more the bright example see;
what Emma was to him be thou to me:
nor send me by thy frown from her I love,
distant and sad, a banish'd man, to rove:
but oh! with pity, long entreated, crown
my pains and hopes; and when thou say'st that one
of all mankind thou lov'st, oh! think on me alone.

Where beauteous Isis and her husband Thame
with mingled waves for ever flow the same,
in times of yore an ancient baron liv'd,
great gifts bestow'd and great respect receiv'd.
When dreadful Edward, with successful care,
led his free Britons to the Gallic war,
this lord had headed his appointed bands,
in firm allegiance to his king's commands,
and (all due honours faithfully discharg'd)
had brought back his paternal coat, enlarg'd
with a new mark, the witness of his toil,
and no inglorious part of foreign spoil.
From the loud camp retir'd and noisy court,
in honourable ease and rural sport
the remnant of his days he safely pass'd,
nor found they lagg'd too slow nor flew too fast;
he made his wish with his estate comply,
joyful to live, yet not afraid to die.
One child he had, a daughter chaste and fair,
his age's comfort and his fortune's heir.
They call'd her Emma, for the beauteous dame
who gave the virgin birth had borne the name;
the name th' indulgent father doubly lov'd,

for in the child the mother's charms improv'd:
yet as when little round his knees she play'd,
he call'd her oft, in sport, his Nut-brown Maid;
the friends and tenants took the fondling word,
(as still they please who imitate their lord)
usage confirm'd what fancy had begun;
the mutual terms around the lands were known,
and Emma and the Nut-brown Maid were one.

As with her stature still her charms increas'd,
through all the isle her beauty was confess'd.
Oh! what perfections must that virgin share
who fairest is esteem'd where all are fair?
From distant shires repair the noble youth,
and find report for once had lessen'd truth.
By wonder first and then by passion mov'd,
they came, they saw, they marvell'd, and they lov'd.
By public praises and by secret sighs
each own'd the general power of Emma's eyes.
In tilts and tournaments the valiant strove
by glorious deeds to purchase Emma's love.
In gentle verse the witty told their flame,
and grac'd their choicest songs with Emma's name.
In vain they combated, in vain they writ,
useless their strength, and impotent their wit:
great Venus only must direct the dart,
which else will never reach the fair one's heart,
spite of th' attempts of force and soft effects of art:
great Venus must prefer the happy one;
in Henry's cause her favour must be shown,
and Emma, of mankind, must love but him alone.

While these in public to the castle came,
and by their grandeur justify'd their flame,
more secret ways the careful Henry takes;
his 'squires, his arms, and equipage, forsakes.

In borrow'd name and false attire array'd,
oft he finds means to see the beauteous maid.
When Emma hunts, in huntsman's habit drest,
Henry on foot pursues the bounding beast;
in his right hand his beachen pole he bears,
and graceful at his side his horn he wears.
Still to the glade where she has bent her way,
with knowing skill he drives the future prey;
bids her decline the hill and shun the brake,
and shews the path her steed may safest take;
directs her spear to fix the glorious wound,
pleas'd in his toils to have her triumph crown'd,
and blows her praises in no common sound.
A falc'ner Henry is when Emma hawks;
with her of tarsels and of lures he talks:
upon his wrist the tow'ring merlin stands,
practis'd to rise and stoop at her commands:
and when superior now the bird has flown,
and headlong brought the tumbling quarry down,
with humble reverence he accosts the fair,
and with the honour'd feather decks her hair.
Yet still as from the sportive field she goes,
his downcast eye reveals his inward woes;
and by his look and sorrow is express'd
a nobler game pursu'd than bird or beast.
A shepherd now along the plain he roves,
and with his jolly pipe delights the groves.
The neighb'ring swains around the stranger throng,
or to admire or emulate his song;
while with soft sorrow he renews his lays,
nor heedful of their envy or their praise:
but soon as Emma's eyes adorn the plain,
his notes he raises to a nobler strain,
with dutiful respect and studious fear,

lest any careless sound offend her ear.
A frantic gypsy now the house he haunts,
and in wild phrases speaks dissembled wants.
With the fond maids in palmistry he deals;
they tell the secret first which he reveals;
says who shall wed and who shall be beguil'd;
what groom shall get, and 'squire maintain, the child:
but when bright Emma would her fortune know,
a softer look unbends his op'ning brow:
with trembling awe he gazes on her eye,
and in soft accents forms the kind reply,
that she shall prove as fortunate as fair,
and Hymen's choicest gifts are all reserv'd for her.
Now oft had Henry chang'd his sly disguise,
unmark'd by all but beauteous Emma's eyes;
oft had found means alone to see the dame,
and at her feet to breathe his am'rous flame;
and oft the pangs of absence to remove
by letters, soft interpreters of love;
till time and industry (the mighty two
which bring our wishes nearer to our view)
made him perceive that the inclining fair
receiv'd his vows with no reluctant ear;
that Venus had confirm'd her equal reign,
and dealt to Emma's heart a share of Henry's pain.
While Cupid smil'd, by kind occasion bless'd,
and with the secret kept the love increas'd.
The am'rous youth frequents the silent groves,
and much he meditates, for much he loves.
He loves, 't is true, and is belov'd again;
great are his joys; but will they long remain?
Emma with smiles receives his present flame,
but smiling will she ever be the same?
Beautiful looks are rul'd by fickle minds,

and summer seas are turn'd by sudden winds:
another love may gain her easy youth;
time changes thought, and flattery conquers truth.
O impotent estate of human life!
where hope and fear maintain eternal strife;
where fleeting joy does lasting doubt inspire,
and most we question what we most desire.
Among thy various gifts, great Heav'n! bestow
our cup of love unmix'd; forbear to throw
bitter ingredients in, nor pall the draught
with nauseous grief; for our ill-judging thought
hardly enjoys the pleasurable taste,
or deems it not sincere or fears it cannot last.
With wishes rais'd, with jealousies oppress,
(alternate tyrants of the human breast)
by one great trial he resolves to prove
the faith of woman and the force of love:
if scanning Emma's virtues, he may find
that beauteous frame enclose a steady mind,
he 'll fix his hope, of future joy secure,
and live a slave to Hymen's happy power;
but if the fair one, as he fears, be frail,
if pois'd aright in Reason's equal scale,
light fly her merits, and her faults prevail,
his mind he vows to free from am'rous care,
the latent mischief from his heart to tear,
resume his azure arms, and shine again in war.
South of the castle, in a verdant glade,
a spreading beech extends her friendly shade;
here oft the nymph his breathing vows had heard;
here oft her silence had her heart declar'd,
as active Spring awak'd her infant buds,
and genial life inform'd the verdant woods,
Henry, in knots involving Emma's name,

had half express'd and half conceal'd his flame
upon this tree; and as the tender mark
grew with the year, and widen'd with the bark,
Venus had heard the virgin's soft address,
that, as the wound, the passion might increase.
As potent Nature shed her kindly showers,
and deck'd the various mead with op'ning flowers,
upon this tree the nymph's obliging care
had left a frequent wreath for Henry's hair,
which as with gay delight the lover found,
pleas'd with his conquest, with the present crown'd,
glorious through all the plains he oft had gone,
and to each swain the mystic honour shewn,
the gift still prais'd, the giver still unknown.

His secret note the troubled Henry writes;
to the known tree the lovely maid invites:
imperfect words and dubious terms express
that unforeseen mischance disturb'd his peace;
that he must something to her ear commend
on which her conduct and his life depend.

Soon as the fair-one had the note receiv'd,
the remnant of the day, alone, she griev'd;
far diff'rent this from every former note
which Venus dictated and Henry wrote;
which told her all his future hopes were laid
on the dear bosom of his Nut-brown Maid;
which always bless'd her eyes and own'd her power;
and bid her oft adieu, yet added more.

Now night advanc'd: the house in sleep were laid,
the nurse experienc'd, and the prying maid;
and, last, that sprite which does incessant haunt
the lover's steps, the ancient maiden aunt.
To her dear Henry Emma wings her way,
with quicken'd pace repairing forc'd delay:

for love, fantastic power! that is afraid
to stir abroad till watchfulness be laid,
undaunted then o'er cliffs and vallies strays,
and leads his votaries safe through pathless ways.
Not Argus, with his hundred eyes, shall find
where Cupid goes, tho' he, poor guide! is blind.
The maiden, first arriving, sent her eye
to ask if yet it's chief delight were nigh:
with fear and with desire, with joy and pain,
she sees, and runs to meet him on the plain;
but, oh! his steps proclaim no lover's haste;
on the low ground his fix'd regards are cast;
his artful bosom heaves dissembled sighs,
and tears suborn'd fall copious from his eyes.
With ease, alas! we credit what we love;
his painted grief does real sorrow move
in the afflicted fair: adown her cheek,
trickling, the genuine tears their current break!
Attentive stood the mournful nymph; the man
broke silence first; the tale alternate ran.

Henry. Sincere, O tell me, hast thou felt a pain,
Emma, beyond what woman knows to feign?
Has thy uncertain bosom ever strove
with the first tumults of a real love?
Hast thou now dreaded and now blest his sway,
by turns averse and joyful to obey?
thy virgin softness hast thou e'er bewail'd,
as reason yielded and as love prevail'd?
and wept the potent god's resistless dart,
his killing pleasure, his ecstatic smart,
and heavenly poison thrilling through thy heart?
If so, with pity view my wretched state,
at least deplore, and then forget my fate:
to some more happy knight reserve thy charms,

by fortune favour'd and successful arms;
and only as the sun's revolving ray
brings back each year this melancholy day,
permit one sigh, and set apart one tear
to an abandon'd exile's endless care.
For me, alas! outcast of human race,
Love's anger only waits and dire disgrace;
for, lo! these hands in murder are imbru'd,
these trembling feet by Justice are pursu'd:
Fate calls aloud, and hastens me away;
a shameful death attends my longer stay;
and I this night must fly from thee and love,
condemn'd in lonely woods a banish'd man to rove.

Emma. What is our bliss that changeth with the moon,
and day of life that darkens e'er 't is noon?
What is true passion, if unblest it dies?
and where is Emma's joy if Henry flies?
If love, alas! be pain, the pain I bear
no thought can figure and no tongue declare.
Ne'er faithful woman felt, nor false one feign'd,
the flames which long have in my bosom reign'd:
the god of Love himself inhabits there,
with all his rage, and dread, and grief, and care,
his compliment of stores and total war.

O! cease then coldly to suspect my love,
and let my deed, at least, my faith approve.
Alas! no youth shall my endearments share,
nor day nor night shall interrupt my care;
no future story shall with truth upbraid
the cold indiff'rence of the Nut-brown Maid;
nor to hard banishment shall Henry run
while careless Emma sleeps on beds of down.
View me resolv'd, where'er thou lead'st, to go,
friend to thy pain, and partner of thy woe;

for I attest, fair Venus and her son!
that I of all mankind will love but thee alone.

Hen. Let prudence yet obstruct thy vent'rous way,
and take good heed what men will think and say;
that beauteous Emma vagrant courses took,
her father's house and civil life forsook;
that full of youthful blood, and fond of man,
she to the woodland with an exile ran.
Reflect, that lessen'd fame is ne'er regain'd,
and virgin-honour once, is always stain'd:
timely advis'd, the coming evil shun;
better not do the deed than weep it done:
no penance can absolve our guilty fame,
nor tears, which wash out sin, can wash out shame:
then fly the sad effects of desp'rate love,
and leave a banish'd man through lonely woods to rove.

Emma. Let Emma's hapless case be falsely told
by the rash young or the ill-natur'd old;
let every tongue it's various censures choose,
absolve with coldness, or with spite accuse;
fair Truth at last her radiant beams will raise,
and Malice vanquish'd heightens Virtue's praise.
Let then thy favour but indulge my flight,
O! let my presence make thy travels light,
and potent Venus shall exalt my name
above the rumours of censorious Fame;
nor from that busy demon's restless power
will ever Emma other grace implore,
than that this truth should to the world be known,
that I of all mankind have lov'd but thee alone.

Hen. But canst thou wield the sword and bend the bow?
with active force repel the sturdy foe?
When the loud tumult speaks the battle nigh,

and winged deaths in whistling arrows fly,
wilt thou, tho' wounded, yet undaunted stay,
perform thy part, and share the dangerous day?
Then, as thy strength decays, thy heart will fail,
thy limbs all trembling, and thy cheeks all pale;
with fruitless sorrow thou, inglorious maid,
wilt weep thy safety by thy love betray'd;
then to thy friend, by foes o'ercharg'd, deny
thy little useless aid, and coward fly;
then wilt thou curse the chance that made thee love
a banish'd man, condemn'd in lonely woods to rove.

Emma. With fatal certainty Thalestris knew
to send the arrow from the twanging yew:
and, great in arms, and foremost in the war,
Bonduca brandish'd high the British spear.
Could thirst of vengeance and desire of fame
excite the female breast with martial flame?
and shall not Love's diviner power inspire
more hardy virtue and more generous fire?
Near thee, mistrust not, constant I'll abide,
and fall or vanquish, fighting by thy side.
Tho' my inferior strength may not allow
that I should bear or draw the warrior bow,
with ready hand I will the shaft supply,
and joy to see thy victor arrows fly.
Touch'd in the battle by the hostile reed,
shouldst thou, (but Heaven avert it!) shouldst thou bleed,
to stop the wounds my finest lawn I'd tear,
wash them with tears, and wipe them with my hair;
blest when my dangers and my toils have shewn
that I, of all mankind, could love but thee alone.

Hen. But canst thou, tender maid, canst thou sustain
afflictive want, or hunger's pressing pain?

those limbs, in lawn and softest silk array'd,
from sun-beams guarded, and of winds afraid,
can they bear angry Jove? can they resist
the parching Dogstar and the bleak north-east?
When, chill'd by adverse snows and beating rain,
we tread with weary steps the longsome plain;
when, with hard toil, we seek our ev'ning food,
berries and acorns, from the neighb'ring wood,
and find among the cliffs no other house
but the thin covert of some gather'd boughs,
wilt thou not then reluctant send thine eye
around the dreary waste, and, weeping, try
(tho' then, alas! that trial be to late)
to find thy father's hospitable gate,
and seats where Ease and Plenty brooding sate?
those seats whence, long excluded, thou must mourn:
that gate for ever barr'd to thy return;
wilt thou not then bewail ill-fated love,
and hate a banish'd man, condemn'd in woods to rove?

Emma. Thy rise of fortune did I only wed,
from it's decline determin'd to recede;
did I but purpose to embark with thee
on the smooth surface of a summer's sea,
while gentle zephyrs play in prosp'rous gales,
and Fortune's favour fills the swelling sails,
but would forsake the ship and make the shore,
when the winds whistle and the tempests roar?
No, Henry, no; one sacred oath has ty'd
our loves; one destiny our lives shall guide;
nor wild nor deep our common way divide.

When from the cave thou risest with the day,
to beat the woods and rouse the bounding prey,
the cave with moss and branches I 'll adorn,
and cheerful sit to wait my lord's return.

And when thou frequent bring'st the smitten deer,
(for seldom, archers say, thy arrows err)
I 'll fetch quick fuel from the neighb'ring wood,
and strike the sparkling flint, and dress the food:
with humble duty and officious haste,
I 'll cull the furthest mead for thy repast:
the choicest herbs I to thy board will bring,
and draw thy water from the freshest spring:
and when at night, with weary toil opprest,
soft slumbers thou enjoy'st and wholesome rest,
watchful I 'll guard thee, and with midnight prayer
weary the gods to keep thee in their care;
and joyous ask, at morn's returning ray,
if thou hast health, and I may bless the day.
My thoughts shall fix, my latest wish depend
on thee, guide, guardian, kinsman, father, friend:
by all these sacred names be Henry known
to Emma's heart; and, grateful, let him own
that she, of all mankind, could love but him alone.

Hen. Vainly thou tell'st me what the woman's care
shall in the wildness of the wood prepare:
thou, ere thou goest, unhappiest of thy kind,
must leave the habit and the sex behind.
No longer shall thy comely tresses break,
in flowing ringlets on thy snowy neck,
or sit behind thy head, an ample round,
in graceful braids, with various riband bound;
no longer shall the bodice, aptly lac'd,
from thy full bosom to thy slender waist,
that air and harmony of shape express,
fine by degrees, and beautifully less;
nor shall thy lower garment's artful plait,
from thy fair side dependent to thy feet,
arm their chaste beauties with a modest pride,

and double every charm they seek to hide.
Th' ambrosial plenty of thy shining hair
cropt off and lost, scarce lower than thy ear,
shall stand uncouth; a horseman's coat shall hide
thy taper shape and comeliness of side;
the short trunk-hose shall shew thy foot and knee
licentious, and to common eye-sight free;
and with a bolder stride and looser air,
mingled with men, a man thou must appear.
Nor solitude, nor gentle peace of mind,
mistaken maid, shalt thou in forests find:
't is long since Cynthia and her train were there,
or guardian gods made innocence their care:
vagrants and outlaws shall offend thy view,
for such must be my friends; a hideous crew,
by adverse fortune mix'd in social ill,
train'd to assault, and disciplin'd to kill;
their common loves a lewd abandon'd pack,
the beadle's lash still flagrant on their back;
by sloth corrupted, by disorder fed,
made bold by want, and prostitute for bread:
with such must Emma hunt the tedious day,
assist their violence and divide their prey;
with such she must return at setting light,
tho' not partaker, witness of their night.
Thy ear inur'd to charitable sounds
and pitying love, must feel the hateful wounds
of jest obscene, and vulgar ribaldry,
the ill-bred question and the lewd reply;
brought by long habitude from bad to worse,
must hear the frequent oath, the direful curse,
that latest weapon of the wretches' war,
and blasphemy, sad comrade of despair.
Now, Emma, now the last reflexion make,

what thou would'st follow, what thou must forsake:
by our ill-omen'd stars and adverse heaven
no middle object to thy choice is given;
or yield thy virtue to attain thy love,
or leave a banish'd man, condemn'd in woods to rove.

Emma. O grief of heart! that our unhappy fates
force thee to suffer what thy honour hates;
mix thee among the bad, or make thee run
too near the paths which Virtue bids thee shun.
Yet with her Henry still let Emma go;
with him abhor the vice, but share the woe:
and sure my little heart can never err
amidst the worst, if Henry still be there.
Our outward act is prompted from within,
and from the sinner's mind proceeds the sin:
by her own choice free Virtue is approv'd,
nor by the force of outward objects mov'd.
Who has assay'd no danger gains no praise.
In a small isle, amidst the widest seas,
triumphant Constancy has fix'd her seat;
in vain the Syrens sing, the tempests beat:
their flattery she rejects, nor fears their threat.

For thee alone these little charms I drest,
condemn'd them or absolv'd them by thy test:
in comely figure rang'd my jewels shone,
or negligently plac'd, for thee alone:
for thee again they shall be laid aside;
the woman, Henry, shall put off her pride
for thee: my clothes, my sex, exchang'd for thee,
I 'll mingle with the people's wretched lee:
O line extreme of human infamy!
Wanting the scissars, with these hands I 'll tear
(if that obstructs my flight) this load of hair:
black soot or yellow walnut shall disgrace

this little red and white of Emma's face:
these nails with scratches shall deform my breast,
lest by my look or colour be exprest
the mark of aught high-born, or ever better drest.
Yet in this commerce, under this disguise,
let me be grateful still to Henry's eyes;
lost to the world, let me to him be known;
my fate I can absolve if he shall own
that, leaving all mankind, I love but him alone.

Hen. O wildest thought of an abandon'd mind!
name, habit, parents, woman, left behind,
e'en honour dubious, thou preferrest to go
wild to the woods with me. Said Emma so?
Or did I dream what Emma never said?
O guilty error! and O wretched maid!
whose roving fancy would resolve the same
with him who next should tempt her easy fame,
and blow with empty words the susceptible flame.
Now why should doubtful terms thy mind perplex?
confess thy frailty and avow the sex:
no longer loose desire for constant love
mistake, but say, 't is man with whom thou long'st to rove.

Emma. Are there not poisons, racks, and flames, and swords,
that Emma thus must die by Henry's words?
yet what could swords or poisons, racks or flame,
but mangle and disjoint this brittle frame!
more fatal Henry's words, they murder Emma's fame.

And fall these sayings from that gentle tongue,
where civil speech and soft persuasion hung?
Whose artful sweetness and harmonious strain,
courting my grace, yet courting it in vain,
call'd sighs, and tears, and wishes to it's aid,

and while it Henry's glowing flame convey'd,
still blam'd the coldness of the Nut-brown Maid?
Let envious Jealousy and canker'd Spite,
produce my actions to severest light,
and tax my open day or secret night.
Did e'er my tongue speak my unguarded heart
the least inclin'd to play the wanton's part?
Did e'er my eye one inward thought reveal,
which angels might not hear and virgins tell?
And hast thou, Henry, in my conduct known
one fault but that which I must ever own,
that I of all mankind have lov'd but thee alone?

Hen. Vainly thou talkst of loving me alone;
each man is man, and all our sex is one:
false are our words, and fickle is our mind;
nor in Love's ritual can we ever find
vows made to last, or promises to bind.
By nature prompted, and for empire made,
alike by strength or cunning we invade:
when arm'd with rage we march against the foe,
we lift the battle-axe and draw the bow;
when fir'd with passion, we attack the fair,
delusive sighs and brittle vows we bear;
our falsehood and our arms have equal use,
as they our conquest or delight produce.
The foolish heart thou gav'st, again receive,
the only boon departing love can give.
To be less wretched be no longer true;
what strives to fly thee why shouldst thou pursue?
forget the present flame, indulge a new:
single the loveliest of the am'rous youth;
ask for his vow, but hope not for his truth.
The next man (and the next thou shalt believe)
will pawn his gods, intending to deceive;

will kneel, implore, persist, o'ercome and leave.
Hence let thy Cupid aim his arrows right;
be wise and false, shun trouble, seek delight;
change thou the first, nor wait thy lover's flight.
Why should'st thou weep? let Nature judge our case;
I saw thee young and fair; pursu'd the chase
of youth and beauty: I another saw
fairer and younger: yielding to the law
of our all-ruling mother, I pursu'd
more youth, more beauty. Blest vicissitude!
my active heart still keeps it's pristine flame,
the object alter'd, the desire the same.
This younger, fairer, pleads her rightful charms,
with present power compels me to her arms;
and much I fear from my subjected mind,
(if beauty's force to constant love can bind)
that years may roll ere in her turn the maid
shall weep the fury of my love decay'd,
and weeping follow me, as thou dost now,
with idle clamours of a broken vow.
Nor can the wildness of thy wishes err
so wide, to hope that thou may'st live with her:
Love well thou know'st, no partnership allows;
Cupid averse, rejects divided vows:
then from thy foolish heart, vain maid! remove
a useless sorrow and an ill-starr'd love,
and leave me, with the fair, at large in woods to rove.
Emma. Are we in life through one great error led?
is each man perjur'd and each nymph betray'd?
of the superior sex art thou the worst?
am I of mine the most completely curst?
yet let me go with thee, and going prove,
from what I will endure, how much I love.
This potent beauty, this triumphant fair,

this happy object of our diff'rent care,
her let me follow; her let me attend,
a servant: (she may scorn the name of friend)
what she demands incessant I 'll prepare;
I 'll weave her garlands, and I 'll plait her hair:
my busy diligence shall deck her board,
(for there at least I may approach my lord)
and when her Henry's softer hours advise
his servant's absence, with dejected eyes
far I 'll recede, and sighs forbid to rise.

Yet, when increasing grief brings slow disease,
and ebbing life, on terms severe as these,
will have it's little lamp no longer fed;
when Henry's mistress shews him Emma dead,
rescue my poor remains from vile neglect:
with virgin honours let my hearse be deck'd,
and decent emblem; and, at least, persuade
this happy nymph that Emma may be laid
where thou, dear author of my death, were she,
with frequent eye, my sepulchre may see.
The nymph, amidst her joys, may haply breathe
one pious sigh, reflecting on my death,
and the sad fate which she may one day prove,
who hopes from Henry's vows eternal love.
And thou forsworn, thou, cruel, as thou art,
if Emma's image ever touch'd thy heart,
thou sure must give one thought, and drop one tear
to her whom love abandon'd to despair;
to her, who dying on the wounded stone,
bid it in lasting characters be known
that of mankind she lov'd but thee alone.

Hen. Hear, solemn Jove, and conscious Venus, hear!
and thou, bright maid! believe me, while I swear,
no time, no change, no future flame, shall move

the well-plac'd basis of my lasting love.
O powerful virtue! O victorious fair!
at least excuse a trial too severe;
receive the triumph, and forget the war.

No banish'd man, condemn'd in woods to rove,
entreats thy pardon, and implores thy love:
no perjur'd knight desires to quit thy arms,
fairest collection of thy sex's charms,
crown of my love, and honour of my youth!
Henry, thy Henry, with eternal truth,
as thou may'st wish, shall all his life employ,
and found his glory in his Emma's joy.

In me behold the potent Edgar's heir,
illustrious earl: him, terrible in war,
let Loyre confess, for she has felt his sword,
and, trembling, fled before the British lord.
Him, great in peace and wealth, fair Deva knows,
for she amidst his spacious meadows flows,
inclines her urn upon his fatten'd lands,
and sees his num'rous herds imprint her sands.

And thou, my fair, my dove, shalt raise thy thought
to greatness next to empire; shalt be brought
with solemn pomp to my paternal seat,
where peace and plenty on thy word shall wait:
music and song shall wake the marriage-day,
and while the priests accuse the bride's delay,
myrtles and roses shall obstruct her way.

Friendship shall still thy ev'ning feasts adorn,
and blooming Peace shall ever bless thy morn;
succeeding years their happy race shall run,
and Age, unheeded, by delight come on,
while yet superior love shall mock his power;
and when old Time shall turn the fated hour,
which only can our well-ty'd knot unfold,

what rests of both one sepulchre shall hold.
Hence, then, for ever, from my Emma's breast
(that heaven of softness, and that seat of rest)
ye doubts and fears, and all which know to move
tormenting grief, and all that trouble love;
scatter'd by winds, recede, and wild in forests rove.
Emma. O day! the fairest sure that ever rose!
period and end of anxious Emma's woes!
sire of her joy, and source of her delight,
O! wing'd with pleasure, take thy happy flight,
and give each future morn a tincture of thy white.
Yet tell thy vot'ry, potent queen of Love,
Henry, my Henry, will he never rove?
will he be ever kind, and just, and good?
and is there yet no mistress in the wood?
None, none there is: the thought was rash and vain,
a false idea, and a fancy'd pain,
doubt shall for ever quit my strengthen'd heart,
and anxious Jealousy's corroding smart;
nor other inmate shall inhabit there,
but soft Belief, young Joy, and pleasing Care.
Hence let the tides of plenty ebb and flow,
and Fortune's various gale unheeded blow.
If at my feet the suppliant goddess stands
and sheds her treasure with unweary'd hands,
her present favour cautious I 'll embrace,
and not unthankful use the proffer'd grace;
if she reclaims the temporary boon,
and tries her pinions, flutt'ring to be gone,
secure of mind I 'll obviate her intent,
and unconcern'd return the goods she lent.
Nor happiness can I, nor misery, feel,
from any turn of her fantastic wheel:
Friendship's great laws, and Love's superior powers,

must mark the colour of my future hours.
From the events which thy commands create
I must my blessings or my sorrows date,
and Henry's will must dictate Emma's fate.

Yet while with close delight and inward pride
(which from the world my careful soul shall hide)
I see thee, lord and end of my desire,
exalted high as virtue can require,
with power invested, and with pleasure cheer'd,
sought by the good, by the oppressor fear'd,
loaded and blest with all the affluent store
which human vows at smoking shrines implore;
grateful and humble grant me to employ
my life subservient only to thy joy,
and at my death to bless thy kindness, shewn
to her who, of mankind, could love but thee alone.

While thus the constant pair alternate said,
joyful above them and around them play'd
angels and sportive loves, a num'rous crowd;
smiling they clapt their wings, and low they bow'd:
they tumbled all their little quivers o'er,
to choose propitious shafts, a precious store,
that when their god should take his future darts,
to strike (however rarely) constant hearts,
his happy skill might proper arms employ
all tipt with pleasure, and all wing'd with joy:
and those, they vow'd, whose lives should imitate
these lovers' constancy, should share their fate.

The queen of Beauty stopt her bridled doves,
approv'd the little labour of the loves;
was proud and pleas'd the mutual vow to hear,
and to the triumph call'd the god of War:
soon as she calls the god is always near.

Now Mars, she said, let Fame exalt her voice,
nor let thy conquests only be her choice,
but when she sings great Edward from the field
return'd, the hostle spear and captive shield
in Concord's temple hung, and Gallia taught to yield.
And when, as prudent Saturn shall complete
the years design'd to perfect Britian's state,
the swift-wing'd Power shall take her trump again,
to sing her fav'rite Anna's wondrous reign,
to recollect unwearied Marlbro's toils,
old Rufus' Hall unequal to his spoils,
the British soldier from his high command
glorious, and Gaul thrice vanquish'd by his hand,
let her at least perform what I desire,
with second breath the vocal brass inspire,
and tell the nations in no vulgar strain,
what wars I manage and what wreaths I gain.
And when thy tumults and thy fights are past,
and when thy laurels at my feet are cast;
faithful may'st thou, like British Henry prove,
and Emma-like let me return thy love.
Renown'd for truth let all thy sons appear,
and constant beauty shall reward their care.
Mars smil'd, and bow'd: the Cyprian deity
turn'd to the glorious ruler of the sky;
And thou, she smiling said, great god of Days
and Verse, behold my deed, and sing my praise;
as on the British earth, my fav'rite isle,
thy gentle rays and kindest influence smile,
through all her laughing fields and verdant groves,
proclaim with joy these memorable loves:
from every annual course let one great day
to celebrated sports and floral play
be set aside; and in the softest lays

of thy poetic sons, be solemn praise
and everlasting marks of honour paid
to the true Lover and the Nut-brown Maid.

ABRA.

Thou sovereign Power, whose secret will controuls
the inward bent and motion of our souls!
why hast thou plac'd such infinite degrees
between the cause and cure of my disease?
The mighty object of that raging fire,
in which unpity'd Abra must expire.
Had he been born some simple shepherd's heir,
the lowing herd or fleecy sheep his care,
at morn with him I o'er the hills had run,
scornful of winter's frost and summer's sun,
still asking where he made his flock to rest at noon.
For him at night, the dear expected guest,
I had with hasty joy prepar'd the feast;
and from the cottage, o'er the distant plain,
sent forth my longing eye to meet the swain,
wavering, impatient, toss'd by hope and fear,
till he and joy together should appear,
and the lov'd dog declare his master near.
On my declining neck and open breast
I should have lull'd the lovely youth to rest,
and from beneath his head, at dawning day,
with softest care have stol'n my arm away,
to rise, and from the fold release the sheep,
fond of his flock, indulgent to his sleep.

"Solomon."

ODE.

While blooming youth and gay delight
sit on thy rosy cheeks confest,
thou hast, my dear, undoubted right
to triumph o'er this destin'd breast.
My reason bends to what thy eyes ordain;
for I was born to love and thou to reign.

But would you meanly thus rely
on power, you know I must obey?
exert a legal tyranny,
and do an ill because you may?
Still must I thee, as atheists Heaven, adore;
not see thy mercy, and yet dread thy power?

Take heed, my dear: youth flies apace;
as well as Cupid, time is blind:
soon must those glories of thy face
the fate of vulgar beauty find:
the thousand loves, that arm thy potent eye,
must drop their quivers, flag their wings, and die.

Then wilt thou sigh, when in each frown
a hateful wrinkle more appears;
and putting peevish humours on,
seems but the sad effect of years:
kindness itself too weak a charm will prove
to raise the feeble fires of aged love.

Forc'd compliments, and formal bows,
will shew thee just above neglect:
the heat with which thy lover glows,
will settle into cold respect:
a talking dull Platonic I shall turn:
learn to be civil, when I cease to burn.

Then shun the ill, and know, my dear,
kindness and constancy will prove
the only pillars fit to bear
so vast a weight as that of love.
If thou canst wish to make my flames endure,
thine must be very fierce, and very pure.

Haste, Celia, haste, while youth invites,
obey kind Cupid's present voice;
fill every sense with soft delights,
and give thy soul a loose to joys:
let millions of repeated blisses prove
that thou all kindness art, and I all love.

Be mine, and only mine; take care
thy looks, thy thoughts, thy dreams, to guide
to me alone; nor come so far
as liking any youth beside:
what men e'er court thee, fly them and believe
they're serpents all, and thou the tempted Eve.

So shall I court thy dearest truth,
when beauty ceases to engage;
so, thinking on thy charming youth,
I 'll love it o'er again in age:
so time itself our raptures shall improve,
while still we wake to joy, and live to love.

EPISTLES.

TO THE HON. CHARLES MONTAGUE ESQ.

Afterwards Earl of Halifax.

Howe'er, 'tis well, that while mankind
through fate's perverse meander errs,
he can imagin'd pleasures find,
to combat against real cares.

Fancies and notions he pursues,
which ne'er had being but in thought;
each, like the Grecian artist, woos
the image he himself has wrought.

Against experience he believes;
he argues against demonstration;
pleas'd, when his reason he deceives;
and sets his judgment by his passion.

The hoary fool, who many days
has struggled with continued sorrow,
renews his hope, and blindly lays
the desperate bet upon to-morrow.

To-morrow comes; 'tis noon, 'tis night;
this day like all the former flies:
yet on he runs to seek delight
to-morrow, till to-night he dies.

Our hopes, like towering falcons, aim
at objects in an airy height:
the little pleasure of the game
is from afar to view the flight.

Our anxious pains we, all the day,
in search of what we like employ:

scorning, at night, the worthless prey,
we find the labour gave the joy.

At distance, through an artful glass,
to the mind's eye things will appear:
they lose their forms, and make a mass
confus'd and black, if brought too near.

If we see right, we see our woes:
then what avails it to have eyes?
from ignorance our comfort flows;
the only wretched are the wise.

We wearied should lie down in death:
this cheat of life would take no more,
if you thought fame but empty breath,
I, Phillis but a purjur'd whore.

CELIA TO DAMON.

Atque in amore mala hæc proprio, summeque secundo inveniuntur.— *Lucret.* lib. iy.

What can I say, what arguments can prove
my truth, what colours can describe my love,
if it's excess and fury be not known,
in what thy Celia has already done?
Thy infant flames, whilst yet they were conceal'd
in timorous doubts, with pity I beheld;
with easy smiles dispell'd the silent fear,
that durst not tell me what I died to hear.
In vain I strove to check my growing flame,
or shelter passion under friendship's name,
you saw my heart, how it my tongue bely'd:
and when you press'd, how faintly I deny'd.

E'er guardian thought could bring it's scatter'd aid,
ere reason could support the doubting maid,
my soul, surpris'd, and from herself disjoin'd,
left all reserve, and all the sex, behind:
from your command her motions she receiv'd;
and not for me, but you, she breath'd and liv'd.
But ever blest be Cytherea's shrine,
and fires eternal on her altars shine!
since thy dear breast has felt an equal wound;
since in thy kindness my desires are crown'd.
By thy each look, and thought, and care, 't is shewn,
thy joys are centred all in me alone;
and sure I am thou wouldst not change this hour
for all the white ones fate has in it's power.
Yet thus belov'd, thus loving to excess,
yet thus receiving and returning bliss,
in this great moment, in this golden now,
when every trace of what, or when, or how,
should from my soul by raging love be torn,
and far on swelling seas of rapture borne;
a melancholy tear afflicts my eye,
and my heart labours with a sudden sigh;
invading fears repel my coward joy,
and ills foreseen the present bliss destroy.
Poor as it is, this beauty was the cause,
that with first sighs your panting bosom rose:
but with no owner beauty long will stay,
upon the wings of time borne swift away:
pass but some fleeting years, and these poor eyes
(where now, without a boast, some lustre lies),
no longer shall their little honours keep;
shall only be of use to read or weep;
and on this forehead, where your verse has said,
the loves delighted, and the graces play'd,

insulting Age will trace his cruel way,
and leave sad marks of his destructive sway.
Mov'd by my charms, with them your love may cease,
and as the fuel sinks, the flame decrease:
or angry Heaven may quicker darts prepare,
and Sickness strike what Time awhile would spare.
Then will my swain his glowing vows renew,
then will his throbbing heart to mine beat true;
when my own face deters me from my glass,
and Kneller only shews what Celia was?
Fantastic Fame may sound her wild alarms;
your country, as you think, may want your arms.
You may neglect, or quench, or hate the flame,
whose smoke too long obscur'd your rising name;
and quickly cold indifference will ensue,
when you love's joys through honour's optic view.
Then Celia's loudest prayer will prove too weak,
to this abandon'd breast to bring you back;
when my lost lover the tall ship ascends,
with music gay, and wet with jovial friends,
the tender accent of a woman's cry
will pass unheard, will unregarded die;
when the rough seamen's louder shouts prevail,
when fair occasion shews the springing gale,
and Interest guides the helm, and Honour swells the sail.
Some wretched lines, from this neglected hand,
may find my hero on the foreign strand,
warm with new fires, and pleas'd with new command:
while she who wrote them, of all joy bereft,
to the rude censure of the world is left;
her mangled fame in barbarous pastime lost,
the coxcomb's novel, and the drunkard's toast.

But nearer care (O pardon it!) supplies
sighs to my breast, and sorrow to my eyes.
Love, Love himself (the only friend I have)
may scorn his triumph, having bound his slave.
That tyrant god, that restless conqueror,
may quit his pleasure, to assert his power;
forsake the provinces that bless'd his sway,
to vanquish those which will not yet obey.
Another nymph, with fatal power, may rise,
to damp the sinking beams of Celia's eyes;
with haughty pride may hear her charms confest,
and scorn the ardent vows that I have blest.
You every night may sigh for her in vain,
and rise each morning to some fresh disdain:
while Celia's softest look may cease to charm,
and her embraces want the power to warm:
while these fond arms, thus circling you, may prove
more heavy chains than those of hopeless love.
Just gods! all other things their like produce;
the vine arises from her mother's juice:
when feeble plants or tender flowers decay,
they to their seed their images convey:
where the old myrtle her good influence sheds,
sprigs of like leaf erect their filial heads:
and when the parent rose decays and dies,
with a resembling face the daughter-buds arise.
That product only which our passions bear
eludes the planter's miserable care.
While blooming love assures us golden fruit,
some inborn poison taints the secret root:
soon fall the flowers of joy, soon seeds of hatred
shoot.
Say, shepherd, say, are these reflections true?
or was it but the woman's fear that drew
this cruel scene, unjust to love and you?

Will you be only and for ever mine?
shall neither time nor age our souls disjoin?
from this dear bosom shall I ne'er be torn?
or you grow cold, respectful, and forsworn?
and can you not for her you love do more
than any youth for any nymph before?

TO CLOE WEEPING.

See, whilst thou weep'st, fair Cloe! see
the world in sympathy with thee.
The cheerful birds no longer sing;
each drops his head, and hangs his wing.
The clouds have bent their bosom lower,
and shed their sorrows in a shower.
The brooks beyond their limits flow;
and louder murmurs speak their woe.
The nymphs and swains adopt thy cares;
they heave thy sighs, and weep thy tears.
Fantastic nymph! that grief should move
thy heart obdurate against love.
Strange tears! whose power can soften all,
but that dear breast on which they fall.

ELEGIES.

THE DESPAIRING SHEPHERD.

Alexis shunn'd his fellow swains,
their rural sports and jocund strains:
(heaven guard us all from Cupid's bow!)
he lost his crook, he left his flocks;
and, wand'ring through the lonely rocks,
he nourish'd endless woe.

The nymphs and shepherds round him came;
his grief some pity, others blame;
the fatal cause all kindly seek:
he mingled his concern with their's;
he gave them back their friendly tears:
he sigh'd, but would not speak.

Clorinda came among the rest;
and she too kind concern exprest,
and ask'd the reason of his woe:
she ask'd, but with an air and mien,
that made it easily foreseen,
she fear'd too much to know.

The shepherd rais'd his mournful head;
and will you pardon me, he said,
while I the cruel truth reveal?
which nothing from my breast should tear;
which never should offend your ear,
but that you bid me tell.

'T is thus I rove, 't is thus complain,
since you appear'd upon the plain;

you are the cause of all my care:
your eyes ten thousand dangers dart;
ten thousand torments vex my heart:
I love, and I despair.

Too much, Alexis, I have heard:
'tis what I thought; 'tis what I fear'd:
and yet I pardon you, she cry'd:
but you shall promise ne'er again
to breathe your vows, or speak your pain:
he bow'd, obey'd, and died.

THE GARLAND.

The pride of every grove I chose,
the violet sweet and lily fair,
the dappled pink and blushing rose,
to deck my charming Cloe's hair.

At morn the nymph vouchaf'd to place
upon her brow the various wreath;
the flowers less blooming than her face,
the scent less fragrant than her breath.

The flowers she wore along the day;
and every nymph and shepherd said,
that in her hair they look'd more gay
than glowing in their native bed.

Undrest, at ev'ning, when she found
their odours lost, their colours past;
she chang'd her look, and on the ground
her garland and her eye she cast.

That eye dropt sense distinct and clear,
as any muse's tongue could speak,

when from it's lid a pearly tear,
ran trickling down her beauteous cheek.

Dissembling what I knew too well;
my love! my life! said I, explain
this change of humour: pray thee tell:
that falling tear.—What does it mean?

She sigh'd, she smil'd; and to the flowers
pointing, the lovely moralist said:
See! friend, in some few fleeting hours,
see yonder, what a change is made!

Ah me! the blooming pride of May,
and that of beauty are but one:
at morn both flourish bright and gay,
both fade at ev'ning, pale, and gone!

At dawn poor Stella danc'd and sung;
the am'rous youth around her bow'd:
at night her fatal knell was rung!
I saw and kiss'd her in her shroud:

such as she is, who dy'd to-day,
such I, alas! may be to-morrow:
go, Damon, bid thy muse display
the justice of thy Cloe's sorrow.

EPITAPHS.

ON SAUNTERING JACK & IDLE JOAN.

Interr'd beneath this marble stone,
lie sauntering Jack and idle Joan.
While rolling years threescore and one
did round this globe their courses run;
if human things went ill or well:
if changing empires rose or fell;
the morning pass'd, the evening came,
and found this couple still the same.
They walk'd, and eat, good folks! what then?
Why then they walk'd and eat again.
They soundly slept the night away;
they did just nothing all the day:
and having bury'd children four,
would not take pains to try for more.
No sister either had, or brother;
they seem'd just tally'd for each other.

Their moral and economy
most perfectly they made agree:
each virtue kept it's proper bound,
nor trespass'd on the other's ground.
Nor fame nor censure they regarded:
they neither punish'd nor rewarded.
He car'd not what the footman did;
her maids she neither prais'd nor chid:
so every servant took his course;
and bad at first, they all grew worse.
Slothful disorder fill'd his stable;
and sluttish plenty deck'd her table.

Their beer was strong; their wine was port;
their meal was large: their grace was short.
They gave the poor the remnant meat,
just when it grew not fit to eat.

They paid the church and parish rate,
and took, but read not, the receipt;
for which they claim'd their Sunday's due,
of slumbering in an upper pew.

No man's defects sought they to know;
so never made themselves a foe.
No man's good deeds did they commend;
so never rais'd themselves a friend.

Nor cherish'd they relations poor,
that might decrease their present store:
nor barn nor house did they repair,
that might oblige their future heir.

They neither added nor confounded;
they neither wanted, nor abounded.
Each Christmas they accounts did clear,
and wound their bottom round the year.

Nor tear nor smile did they employ
at news of public grief, or joy.
When bells were rung, and bonfires made,
if ask'd, they ne'er deny'd their aid;
their jug was to the ringers carry'd,
whoever either dy'd or marry'd.
Their billet at the fire was found,
whoever was depos'd, or crown'd.

Nor good, nor bad, nor fools, nor wise;
they would not learn, nor could advise;
without love, hatred, joy, or fear,
they led—a kind of—as it were—
nor wish'd, nor car'd, nor laugh'd, nor cry'd
and so they liv'd; and so they died.

FOR MY OWN MONUMENT.

As doctors give physic by way of prevention,
Mat, alive and in health, of his tombstone took care;
for delays are unsafe, and his pious intention
may haply be never fulfill'd by his heir.

Then take Mat's word for it, the sculptor is paid,
that the figure is fine, pray believe your own eye;
yet credit but lightly what more may be said,
for we flatter ourselves, and teach marble to lie.

Yet, counting as far as to fifty his years,
his virtues and vices were as other men's are;
high hopes he conceiv'd, and he smother'd great fears,
in a life party-colour'd, half pleasure, half care.

Nor to business a drudge, nor to faction a slave,
he strove to make interest and freedom agree;
in public employments industrious and grave,
and alone with his friends, lord, how merry was he!

Now in equipage stately, now humbly on foot,
both fortunes he try'd, but to neither would trust;
and whirl'd in the round, as the wheel turn'd about,
he found riches had wings, and knew man was but dust.

This verse little polish'd, tho' mighty sincere,
sets neither his titles nor merit to view;
it says that his relics collected lie here,
and no mortal yet knows too if this may be true.

Fierce robbers there are that infest the highway,
so Mat may be kill'd, and his bones never found;
false witness at court, and fierce tempests at sea,
so Mat may yet chance to be hang'd, or be drown'd.

If his bones lie in earth, roll in sea, fly in air,
to fate we must yield, and the thing is the same.
And if passing thou giv'st him a smile or a tear,
he cares not; yet pr'ythee be kind to his fame.

EXTEMPORE.

Nobles and heralds, by your leave,
here lies what once was Matthew Prior,
the son of Adam and of Eve;
can Bourbon or Nassau claim higher?

FOR MY OWN TOMBSTONE.

To me 't was given to die: to thee 't is given
to live: alas! one moment sets us even.
Mark! how impartial is the will of Heaven!

MISCELLANIES.

THE LADY'S LOOKING-GLASS.

In Imitation of a Greek Idyllium.

Celia and I the other day
walk'd o'er the sand-hills to the sea:
the setting sun adorn'd the coast,
his beams entire, his fierceness lost:
and, on the surface of the deep,
the winds lay only not asleep:
the nymph did like the scene appear,
serenely pleasant, calmly fair:
soft fell her words, as flew the air.
With secret joy I heard her say,
that she would never miss one day
a walk so fine, a sight so gay.

But, oh the change! the winds grow high!
impending tempests charge the sky;
the lightning flies, the thunder roars;
and big waves lash the frighten'd shores.
Struck with the horror of the sight,
she turns her head and wings her flight:
and trembling vows she 'll ne'er again
approach the shore, or view the main.

Once more, at least, look back, said I,
thyself in that large glass descry:
when thou art in good-humour drest;
when gentle reason rules thy breast;
the sun upon the calmest sea
appears not half so bright as thee:
't is then that with delight I rove

upon the boundless depth of love:
I bless my chain; I hand my oar;
nor think on all I left on shore.
But when vain doubt and groundless fear
do that dear foolish bosom tear;
when the big lip and watery eye
tell me the rising storm is nigh;
'tis then thou art yon angry main,
deform'd by winds, and dash'd by rain
and the poor sailor, who must try
it's fury, labours less than I.
Shipwreck'd in vain to land I make,
while Love and Fate still drive me back:
forc'd to doat on thee thy own way,
I chide thee first, and then obey.
Wretched when from thee, vex'd when nigh,
I with thee, or without thee, die.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP:

A PASTORAL.

By Mrs. Elizabeth Singer, afterwards Rowe.

Amaryllis. While from the skies the ruddy sun descends,
and rising night the evening shade extends;
while pearly dews o'erspread the fruitful field,
and closing flowers reviving odours yield;
let us, beneath these spreading trees, recite
what from our hearts our muses may indite.
Nor need we, in this close retirement, fear,
lest any swain our am'rous secrets hear.

Sylvia. To every shepherd I would mine proclaim;
since fair Aminta is my softest theme:

a stranger to the loose delights of love,
my thoughts the nobler warmth of friendship prove:
and, while it's pure and sacred fire I sing,
chaste goddess of the groves, thy succour bring.

Amar. Propitious god of love my breast inspire
with all thy charms, with all thy pleasing fire;
propitious god of love thy succour bring,
whilst I thy darling, thy Alexis sing;
Alexis, as the op'ning blossoms fair,
lovely as light, and soft as yielding air.
For him each virgin sighs; and on the plains
the happy youth above each rival reigns.
Nor to the echoing groves and whispering spring,
in sweeter strains does artful Conor sing;
when loud applauses fill the crowded groves,
and Phœbus the superior song approves.

Syl. Beauteous Aminta is as early light,
breaking the melancholy shades of night.
When she is near all anxious trouble flies,
and our reviving hearts confess her eyes.
Young love, and blooming joy, and gay desires,
in every breast the beauteous nymph inspires;
and on the plain when she no more appears,
the plain a dark and gloomy prospect wears.
In vain the streams roll on: the eastern breeze
dances in vain among the trembling trees:
in vain the birds begin their evening song,
and to the silent night their notes prolong:
nor groves, nor crystal streams, nor verdant field,
does wonted pleasure in her absence yield.

Amar. And in his absence, all the pensive day
in some obscure retreat I lonely stray:
all day to the repeating caves complain,
in mournful accents, and a dying strain;

Dear lovely youth, I cry to all around;
dear lovely youth, the flattering vales resound.
Syl. On flowery banks, by every murmuring stream
Aminta is my muse's softest theme:
'tis she who does my artful notes refine:
with fair Aminta's name my noblest verse shall shine.
Amar. I'll twine fresh garlands for Alexis' brows,
and consecrate to him eternal vows;
the charming youth shall my Apollo prove;
he shall adorn my songs, and tune my voice to love.

TO THE AUTHOR OF THE FOREGOING PASTORAL.

By Sylvia if thy charming self be meant;
if friendship be thy virgin vow's extent;
oh! let me in Aminta's praises join:
her's my esteem shall be, my passion thine.
When for thy head the garland I prepare,
a second wreath shall bind Aminta's hair;
and, when my choicest songs thy worth proclaim,
alternate verse shall bless Aminta's name;
my heart shall own the justice of her cause,
and Love himself submit to Friendship's laws.
But, if, beneath thy number's soft disguise
some favour'd swain, some true Alexis lies;
if Amaryllis breathes thy secret pains,
and thy fond heart beats measure to thy strains;
may'st thou, howe'er I grieve, for ever find
the flame propitious, and the lover kind!
May Venus long exert her happy power,
and make thy beauty, like thy verse, endure!
May every god his friendly aid afford,

Pan guard thy flock, and Ceres bless thy board!
But, if by chance the series of thy joys
permit one thought less cheerful to arise,
piteous transfer it to the mournful swain,
who, loving much, who, not belov'd again,
feels an ill-fated passion's last excess,
and dies in woe, that thou may'st live in peace.

LOVE DISARMED.

Beneath a myrtle's verdant shade
as Cloe half asleep was laid,
Cupid perch'd lightly on her breast,
and in that heaven desir'd to rest:
over her paps his wings he spread;
between he found a downy bed,
and nestled-in his little head.
Still lay the god, the nymph surpris'd,
yet mistress of herself, devis'd
how she the vagrant might enthrall,
and captive him who captives all.
Her bodice half way she unlac'd;
about his arms she slyly cast
the silken bond, and held him fast.
The god awak'd; and thrice in vain
he strove to break the cruel chain;
and thrice in vain he shook his wing,
incumber'd in the silken string.
Fluttering the god, and weeping, said,
Pity poor Cupid, generous maid,
who happen'd, being blind, to stray,
and on thy bosom lost his way;
who stray'd alas! but knew too well,

he never there must hope to dwell:
set an unhappy prisoner free,
who ne'er intended harm to thee.
To me pertains not, she replies,
to know or care where Cupid flies;
what are his haunts, or which his way;
where he would dwell, or whither stray;
yet will I never set thee free;
for harm was meant and harm to me.
Vain fears which vex my virgin heart!
I'll give thee up my bow and dart;
untangle but this cruel chain,
and freely let me fly again.
Agreed; secure my virgin heart:
instant give up thy bow and dart:
the chain I'll in return untie;
and freely thou again shalt fly.
Thus she the captive did deliver;
the captive thus gave up his quiver.
The god disarm'd e'er since that day,
passes his life in harmless play;
flies round, or sits upon her breast,
a little fluttering idle guest.
E'er since that day the beauteous maid
governs the world in Cupid's stead;
directs his arrow as she wills;
gives grief, or pleasure; spares or kills.

WRITTEN IN THE "NOUVEAUX INTERETS DES PRINCES DE L' EUROPE."

Blest be the princes, who have fought
for pompous names, or wide dominion;
since by their error we are taught,
that happiness is but opinion!

A SIMILE.

Dear Thomas! didst thou never pop
thy head into a tin-man's shop?
There, Thomas, didst thou never see
('t is but by way of similie)
a squirrel spend his little rage,
in jumping round a rolling cage;
the cage, as either side turn'd up,
striking a ring of bells at top?—
Mov'd in the orb, pleas'd with the chimes,
the foolish creature thinks he climbs:
but here or there, turn wood wire,
he never gets two inches higher.
So fares it with those merry blades,
who frisk it under Pindus' shades.
In noble song, and lofty odes,
they tread on stars, and talk with gods;
still dancing in an airy round,
still pleas'd with their own verses' sound;
brought back, how fast soe'er they go,
always aspiring, always low.

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